

A
COMMENTARY ON
METHUEN'S
ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN VERSE

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INTRODUCTORY

What Robert Lynd's Introduction really says:

In Shakespeare's play, "Much Ado about Nothing", the character Beatrice was said to have been born "under a dancing star." Her destiny, her lot, was to foot it fealty, to express happiness in ordered movement. And all human beings under excitement or great joy tend not only to move but to think and speak in pulses and thrills and throbs like heart-beats, in fact, rhythmically. Most might be surprised if told they were poets because they reacted thus. But the child who beats a spoon on the table, delighting in the *regularity* of the noise, is a poet. He is dandled and trotted on uncle's knee; he learns to run in jingling toy harness. Fairs have swings; there are horses to ride, the tick of time-pieces, the puff-puff and its jolts; all these are rhythmical. The popularity of nursery rhymes is due to their fanning excitement by their rhythm, at the same time as they stimulate imagination by their absurd situations. The best, like

Ride a-cock-horse to Banbury Cross
To see a fine lady ride on a white horse
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes
She shall have music wherever she goes!

and

Mary, Mary, quite contrary
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle-shells
And pretty maids all in a row!

"liberate us into a fairyland of chiming music and flowers." "Poetry begins as a random voyage among the

blue seas of fancy, though it may end with the return of a laden treasure-ship of the imagination into the harbours of home." This means that at first we have simply the child's wonder and surprise at being able to think of things that are not real, not present to the senses; and so the stranger they are, the more one enjoys them. This is the poetry of innocence. Afterwards, as the wings of the imagination grow stronger, one learns to use them to penetrate, to learn more about the meaning and significance of the world. This is the poetry of experience. But gifted poets are able to retain the child's awe and wonder in the face of the unknown, the "mighty sense of inexperience." Consequently they are not at all imprisoned by apparent facts.

This escape from lower reality into higher conceptions is not the only definition of poetry. Some others mentioned by Lynd are, inspired verse (or prose), literature in rhythm, and so on. But whatever we call it the thing itself is natural to man, to all men, not the intellectual few. Memorability encouraged rhyme, like the mnemonics we learn at school. Lynd rather ineptly says that poetry has a double birth; he only means it has two parents like the rest of us. They are, utilitarianism, or practical purpose, and aesthesis, or the love of form. Didactic writers such as Hesiod giving advice to farmers, Lucretius expounding atomic physics, or Kipling in our set matter, exhorting young imperialists, rise above mere memorable rules into beauty. Their interest and excitement make them imaginative. Even the satirist and humorist, Horace and Juvenal at Rome, Pope in London, polish their shafts with rhyme and metre so that it is hard to forget them when abler aphorisms not so moulded in poetic form are lost

to us. Narrative too; the better the story the more likely it is to be in verse; the greatest yarns of all, Helen and Ulysses, made Homer. There are beautiful tales in prose, but they have nothing like the influence.

On the other hand, printing and reference libraries have so much obviated the need for students to have all their data embedded in their memories that this side of the utilitarian aspect is largely out of date. No one is likely to write a treatise in verse now-a-days. The other strong motive to poetry, the love of rhythmic reverberation, remains. This and this only fully satisfies the longing for the expression in great crises of happiness or grief, to find love returned, or the intimate bereavement. Moreover, common speech is by its nature truly common; before the exceptional it fails. The deeper emotions of life and higher aspirations cannot be expressed in the tongue of commerce. So we return to poetry, which portrays the loftiest ideals and most tremendous events in language fitted to the occasion.

We are apt to forget that the ordinary world, if not entirely illusory, has a false set of values which distort reality out of recognition. "An employer seems huger and more imminent than God." By poetry we can escape this falsity and live for a time again in the lasting values, truth, beauty and justice. In fact art is not so much an escape *from* life as an escape *into* life. The true function of the imagination is to open the eyes of the mind to such perfections as friendship, patriotism, love of family and nature. Without it they can hardly flourish, at best only as spasmodic instinctive impulses. It is true, materialism has again and again made a bid to possess us, notably of

late years in Russia. But no sooner has man settled down to enjoy his goods, his co-ordinated production, distribution, and exchange, than he is conscious of profound dissatisfaction. Poetry is back. This fact has been formulated by Sir Henry Newbolt in an essay in which he treats poetry as a transfiguration of life heightened by the homesickness of the spirit for a perfect (does he mean moral?) world. This nostalgia takes many forms; longing for the past: golden age, for permanence, or for beauty. In our set poems, Hardy longs for romance, Yeats for the Celtic twilight, Davies for unhurried appreciation of nature (so he says), De La Mare for the understanding of a hidden world of spirits and the past. But all enable us to share a more intense experience, whether we stress the transitoriness of beauty with De La Mare, or the unexplored riches of it with Davies. We need to remember that each has his facet, his personal contribution; none would claim to be, and none is, an authoritative teacher and guide.

✓Proceeding to the modernity of the moderns, Lynd remarks that they are not especially revolutionary, whether in regard to the use of old forms or the invention of new ones. Some critics talk as if an abyss separated the matter of this anthology from earlier work; it is not so, though this does exhibit a natural reaction from Tennyson (except in the unfortunate obsession of Watson, where it is all mixed up with Wordsworth). But one general comment can be risked; sincerity has been preferred to style, and involved in this, there seems to have come about an indifference to phrase. Still, it is dangerous and absurd to try to include all the poets of this anthology in a sweeping generalisation "securely herded like cattle in a yard." The "nine o'clock" in the morn-

ing" competency, alertness, and anticipatory manner of Bridges is far from the "midnight, with passionate memories of noontide" of Hardy's cool retrospect. Hardy is an uncrowned king of tragedy; Bridges is learned enough to instruct the cleverest. Similarly, while Yeats dreams of faeries and spells, Davies stands and stares at the visible world. Chesterton, Masfield and Kipling, different in much, are alike in gusto and humour; but Francis Thompson's muse is a votive offering, in a tended shrine. All this illustrates the great variety of moods among poets latterly. Even those who might be expected to fall into one class, such as the war poets, have more differences than similarities (Brooke's exalted ardour and Owen's compassionate horror).

Georgian poetry, that is, work written since 1910, has been subject to ridicule partly as self-conscious, partly as soulless. Certainly there is something to be said on both counts. Politics and love no longer fire the bard. Perhaps democracy has done for us; "great poetry is not the expression of collective feeling; it is the speech of soul to soul." But, says Lynd, without invidious comparisons, it is possible to appreciate in this work its sensibility, its wealth of observation, its conquest of new themes, its perpetual re-discovery of simple things. (LEARN THE LAST SENTENCE BY HEART). Perhaps the last point, rediscovery, is the key to understanding it. We have rediscovered our own country, the English shires and counties; there is a return to faith and religion.

It is a "minor function of criticism" and in practice futile, to try to list poets in order of merit. This does

not mean that we have no absolute standards, or deny towering genius such as that of Milton. But there is no need to claim that either Wordsworth or Keats is the greater, in order to enjoy both. It is more interesting to appreciate than to calculate. All the poets here have their excellences, and they are but a few among myriads. "The poets of to-day are not a remnant (like the faithful remnant of monotheists in the Old Testament) but a nation." That is why it was worth while making this collection, which could not have been so varied and catholic in an age poor in poets.



Biographical notes with characteristic works.

"AE" Pseudonym of George William Russell. (1867-1935.) Born in Ireland; spent most of his life in Dublin. Studied at the School of Art; became acquainted with Yeats and Stephens. Employed to organise rural co-operative societies and banks; continued to paint, and write poetry; supported Irish Nationalism and Renaissance. His house one of the important literary centres in Dublin; read much in Oriental mystical literature. Contributed an article to 'The Irish Theosophist' under the pseudonym of "AEon", but the compositor omitted the last two letters, and the piece appeared under the diphthong 'AE' which pen-name was used by him ever since.

Poems: Homeward Songs by the Way, 1894; The Earth Breath and Other Poems, 1897; Collected Poems, 1913; Midsummer Eve, 1928; The House of Titans and Other Poems, 1934.

Characteristics & influences: Romance, Nationalism, Oriental mysticism. Supernaturalism.

Binyon, (Robert) Laurence (1869—) Born at Lancaster, cousin of Stephen Phillips. Educated at Oxford. Won the Newdigate Prize in 1890. Since 1893 upon the Staff of the British Museum, later Keeper of Prints and Drawings. A great authority on Oriental art. Lectured in America & Japan; became Professor of Poetry at Harvard. President of the English Association, 1933-34.

Poems: Lyrical Poems, 1894; Odes, 1901; The Winning Fan, Poems on the Great War, 1914; The Secret, 1920; The Sirens, an O. e. 1924; Koya San. Four Poems from Japan, 1932.

Characteristics & influences. Art, War, Oriental literature, Translations from foreign languages.

Bridges, Robert (Seymour) (1844—1930). Born in the Isle of Thanet. Educated at Eton and Oxford; studied medicine and practised as a doctor in leading London hospitals. Gave up medicine for literature in 1882; lived near Oxford. Succeeded Alfred Austin as Poet Laureate in 1913; wrote much for the Society of Pure English founded in 1913. In 1927 became Chairman of of the B. B. C.'s Advisory Committee on Spoken English.

Poems: Growth of Love, 1876; Eros and Psyche, 1885; Hymns 1899; October and Other Poems, 1920; The Testament of Beauty, 1929. Also plays and criticisms.

Characteristics and influences: Greece and Rome. Prosody, Elizabethan literature, English landscape, Milton, Keats, Platonism.

Brooke Rupert (1887-1915). Born and educated at Rugby joined King's College, Cambridge; became Fellow in 1913. Lived for a time at the Old Vicarage, Grantchester. Contributed to 'Georgian Poetry' and 'New

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Numbers'. Spent some time in Germany. America and South Seas. Took part in the Antwerp relief expedition; was sent to the Dardanelles in 1915; died on the way at Scyros and lies buried there; an international monument erected to him. Bequeathed his literary income to his friends Walter de la Mare, W. W. Gibson & Lascelles Abercrombie.

Poems : Poems 1911; 1914 and Other Poems.

Characteristics and influences : War, Travel, Humour, Patriotism.

Chesterton, Gilbert Keith. (1874-1936). Born and educated in London; studied art. Reviewer for the London 'Bookman.' Leader of the Distributist Movement against capitalism and socialism: President of the Distributist League. Became Roman Catholic in 1922. Went to America. Illustrated several novels of Hilaire Belloc.

Poems : The Wild Knight and Other Poems, 1900; The Ballad of the White Horse, 1911; Poems, 1915; New and Collected Poems, 1929.

Characteristics and influences : London, Roman Catholicism, History, Satire, Paradox, Journalism.

Davidson, John (1857-1909). Born and educated in Scotland. Came to London in 1889 and wrote novels, poems, plays and a series of 'Testaments' expounding in blank verse a rebellious and materialistic philosophy. Received a Civil List Pension in 1906. Committed suicide in 1909.

Poems : Fleet Street Eclogues, 1893; Ballads and Songs, 1894; The Last Ballad, 1899; God and Mammon (unfinished), 1907.

Characteristics & influences : Social reform, Science, Philosophy, Pessimism, Scotland.

Davies, William Henry (1871—). Born, in Monmouthshire, of Welsh parents; apprenticed to a picture-frame maker. Turned a tramp and made about a dozen trips between England and America on cattle boats. Turned peddler and street singer and lived in lodging houses.

Poems: *The Soul's Destroyer*, 1907; *Nature Poems*, 1908; *Raptures*, 1918; *The Song of Life*, 1920; *The Lovers' Song Book*, 1933.

Characteristics & influences : Nature, Travel, America, Wales, Wordsworth, Elizabethan lyrists.

De La Mare, Walter (John) (1873—). Born in Kent; descended from a Huguenot family, related to Browning. Pseudonym—Walter Ramal. Entered business in 1890. Reviewer for *The London Times* and *The Westminster Gazette*. Friend of Rupert Brooke.

Poems : *Songs of Childhood*, 1902; *The Listeners and Other Poems*, 1912; *Poems for Children*, 1930; *Old Rhymes and New*, 1932.

Characteristics & influences : Child life, The supernatural, Music, Technique.

Drinkwater, John. (1882-1937). Born in Essex, educated at Oxford High School and Birmingham University. Worked for a time in various Assurance Offices. One of the founders of the Pilgrim Players later developed into Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Specialised in philately (stamp-collecting).

Poems : *Poems*, 1903; *Poems 1908-14*; *Cromwell and Other Poems*, 1913; *Christmas Poems*, 1931.

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Plays : Abraham Lincoln; Oliver Cromwell: Robert Burns.

Characteristics and influences : History, Politics, Manchester, The United States. Patriotism.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1888—). Born in U. S. A. educated in America, France and England. Since 1913 lived mainly in London, also a bank clerk for some time. Naturalised in 1927. Founder and Editor of *The Criterion*. Professor of Poetry at Harvard, 1932-33.

Poems : Prufrock (1917); The Waste Land, 1922; Ash-Wednesday, 1930. Also plays and criticisms.

Characteristics and influences : Dryden, Shakespeare, Dante, Classics, Sanskrit, Pali, War, Psychology.

Flecker, James Elroy. (1884-1915). Born in London. Studied at Oxford; specialized in Oriental languages at Cambridge. Entered consular service; sent to Constantinople in 1910. Married a Greek woman. Died of consumption at Davos in Switzerland.

Poems : The Bridge of Fire, 1907; The Golden Journey to Samarkand, 1913; Collected Poems, 1923.

Plays : Hassan; Don Juan.

Characteristics and influences : Classics, Objectivism, Eastern life. Technique, Romance.

Gibson, Wilfrid Wilson. (1878—). Born in Northumberland, educated at private schools. Served as a private during the Great War and as a social worker in East End. Lectured in the United States. One of the leaders of Georgian School.

Poems : Mountain Loves, 1902; Urlyn the Harper, 1902; The Nets of Love, 1905; Daily Bread, 1910;

Thoroughfares, 1914; Whin or Hill-Tracks, 1918; Neighbours, 1920; Fuel, 1934.

Characteristics and influences: War, Northumberland, Old English life, The proletariat.

Gosse, Sir Edmund (William). (1849-1928). Born in London, son of a biologist. Educated privately. At eighteen became Assistant Librarian of the British Museum. Lecturer in English Literature, Cambridge, 1884-89. Highly interested in the languages of Northern Europe and English writers of the 17th C. Averse to country life.

Poems: Madrigals, 1870; Firdusi in Exile, 1886; Collected Poems, 1911.

Characteristics and influences: Northern literatures of Europe, Criticism, Journalism, London life.

Gould, Gerald. (1885-1936). Born at Scarborough, educated at Norwich, London and Oxford, took First Class Honours in Classics. Took up journalism and politics; Associate-Editor of *The Daily Herald*. Stood for women's suffrage before the War. Has been Member of the Labour Party. Criticized novels for *The New Statesman* and *The Saturday Review*.

Poems: Lyrics, 1906; Monogamy, a Series of Dramatic Lyrics, 1918; Collected Poems, 1929.

Characteristics and influences: Journalism, Politics, Criticism.

Hardy, Thomas. (1840-1928). Born of a stone mason in Dorsetshire. School-life irregular. Apprenticed to an ecclesiastical architect in 1856. Studied architecture in London, 1862-67; abandoned it for literature. Novels.

Began poetry about 1898 after hostile criticisms of *Jude the Obscure*.

Poems: Wessex Poems, 1898; Poems of the Past and the Present, 1902; The Dynasts (poetic drama), 1904-08; Time's Laughing-stocks, 1909; Satires of Circumstance etc., 1914; Moments of Vision, 1917; Late Lyrics and Earlier, 1922; Human Shows etc., 1925; Winter Words etc., 1928.

Characteristics and influences. War, Pessimism, Dorsetshire, History, Architecture, Painting, Peasant life, Realism, Philosophy. Ancient Greek Tragedy.

Hodgson, Ralph. (1871 —). Born in Yorkshire. Worked as a pressman and draughtsman. A leading authority on bull terriers. Has lived in America. Interested in pugilism. Twice went to Japan as lecturer in English Literature. Has never undertaken literary back-work for a living. Won the Polignac Prize for *The Bull* and *The Song of Honour*.

Poems: The Last Blackbird and Other Lines, 1907; Eve. The Bull, The Song of Honour, The Mystery and Other Poems, 1913-14.

Characteristics and influences: Animal life, America, Patriotism, Humanitarianism.

Kipling, Rudyard. (1865-1936). Born in Bombay. His father was Curator of the Lahore Museum and an artist. Educated in England. Returned to India in 1880; Assistant Editor of *The Civil and Military Gazette* and *The Pioneer*. Back to England; travelled through America, India, China & Japan. The first Englishman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907.

Poems: Departmental Ditties, 1886; Barrack-Room Ballads, 1892; The Seven Seas, 1896; The Five Nations, 1903; The Years Between, 1919; Three Poems, 1934. Also novels, short stories, children's books, war pamphlets.

Characteristics and influences: The Sea, India and the East, Travel, School-life, Journalism, Politics, The British Soldier, U.S.A., War, Henley, Shakespeare, Scott.

✓ **Masefield, John.** (1878—). Born in Herefordshire, son of a lawyer. Ran away to sea at a young age, wandered several years. Bar-keeper in an American saloon. During the last War served with Red Cross and made a lecture tour in America. Became Poet Laureate on the death of Bridges and received the Order of Merit in 1935.

Poems: Salt-water Ballads, 1902; The Everlasting Mercy, 1911; Dauber, 1913; Lollington Downs, 1917; Reynard the Fox, 1919. Also plays, novels, short stories etc.

Characteristics and influences: The Sea, War, History, Nature, Chaucer, Kipling.

Owen, Wilfred (1893-1918). Born in Shropshire; educated in London University. War Service 1915-18; killed a week before the Armistice.

Poems: Poems, 1920. (posthumous, Introduction by Sassoon).

Characteristics and influences: War, Patriotism, Technique, Keats.

Stephens, James. (1882—). Born in Dublin. No regular education, spent his childhood in poverty. Worked as a typist in a solicitor's office when G. W. Russell (Æ) discovered him.

Poems: Insurrections, 1909; The Hill of Vision, 1912; Green Branches, 1916; Reincarnations, 1918; Collected

Poems, 1926. Also novels and short stories. His *The Crock of Gold* is a great prose phantasy.

Characteristics and influences: Ireland, Optimism, Animal life, Oriental mysticism, America, France, Nationalism.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. (1850-94). Son and grandson of lighthouse engineers. Born and educated at Edinburgh. Intended for his father's profession, but devoted himself to literature and journalism. Went to California, returned home, lived at Davos, the Riviera and Bournemouth in search of health. Went to America again and the South Seas, finally settling at Vailima in Samoa, where he died of consumption.

Poems: *The Child's Garden of Verses*, 1885; *Underwoods*, 1887; *Ballads*, 1890; *New Poems* (posthumous), 1918. Also novels, short stories, criticisms.

Characteristics and influences: Nature, Child life, Scotland, America & South Seas, Optimism, Adventure, Romance.

Thomas, Philip Edward. (1878-1917). Born in Wales. Educated at St. Paul's School and Oxford. Served in the War with the Artists' Rifles and was killed at Arras at an observatory outpost on Easter Monday, 1917. Wrote under the pseudonym of 'Edward Eastaway.'

Poems: *Poems*, 1917; *Last Poems* (posthumous), 1919. Also a number of critical essays.

Characteristics and influences: War, English countryside, Patriotism, Criticism.

Thompson, Francis Joseph. (1859-1907). Born in Lancashire, son of a doctor. Studied medicine, soon

acquired a passion for religion, particularly Catholic ritualism. Failed to earn a living, sold books and made boots. Enlisted as a soldier but was discharged. Went to London, lived as errand man, seller of matches, holder of horses' heads. Laudanum habit. Befriended by Mr. and Mrs. Wilfrid Meynell, the first to recognize his genius. Failing health and death from consumption.

Poems: *Poems* (with *The Hound of Heaven*), 1893; *Sister Songs*, 1895; *New Poems*, 1897.

Characteristics and influences. Catholicism, London, Science, Nature, Christian mysticism, Optimism, Art, Mediævalism.

Turner, Walter James Redfern (1889 —). Born in Australia, educated at Melbourne and trained in Germany. Travelled in South Africa and Europe until the outbreak of the Great War, fighting during 1916-19. Has been musical critic to *The New Statesman*, was dramatic critic to *The London Mercury*, and literary editor of *The Daily Herald* for some time.

Poems: *The Hunter and Other Poems*, 1916; *The Dark Fire*, 1918; *Paris and Helen*, 1921; *New Poems*, 1928.

Characteristics and influences: Music, Travel, War, Criticism.

Watson, Sir William, (1858 —). Born in Yorkshire and brought up in Liverpool. Was talked of for laureate on the death of Tennyson in 1892, again on the death of Austin in 1913. Knighted in 1917.

Poems: *The Prince's Quest* etc., 1880; *Epigrams of Art, Life and Nature*, 1884; *Wordsworth's Grave and Other Poems*, 1890; *Lacrymae Musarum and Other Poems*

1892 ; Hymn to the Sea 1895 ; The Hope of the World, 1897 ; Sable and Purple etc. 1910 ; The Muse in Exile, 1913 ; Ireland Arisen 1921, Ireland Unfreed, 1921 ; Selected Poems (by himself), 1928.

Characteristics and influences: Classicism, Political radicalism, Optimism, Wit, Epigram, Patriotism, Literary conservatism.

Yeats, William Butler, (1865—1939). Born and educated in Dublin, his father an artist; spent much of his childhood in the wild district of Sligo; interested in Celtic legend and folklore. Studied art, abandoned it for literature. Founded Irish Literary Societies in London and Dublin; associated with a 'Young Ireland' Society; created the Irish National Theatre; dreamed of a national poetry, Irish in spirit. Took an active part in the Celtic Revival. Became Senator, Irish Free State. Won Nobel Prize for Literature, 1923. Friend and admirer of Morris, Henley, Blake, Shelley, Maeterlinck and French Symbolists.

Poems: The Wanderings of Oisín, 1889; The Wind Among the Reeds, 1899; The Green Helmet and Other Poems, 1910; The Wild Swans of Coole, 1919; Collected Poems, 1933.

Plays: The Countess Cathleen, Deirdre etc.

Characteristics and influences: Oriental mysticism, Ireland, Nationalism. Legend and folklore, Symbolism, Music, Supernaturalism.

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Classification of Poets according to their nationality.

Irish: "A.E."; James Stephens; W. B. Yeats.

Scottish: John Davidson ; R. L. Stevenson.

Welsh: W. H. Davies; E. Thomas.

Australian: W. J. Turner, now in England.

American (U. S. A.): T. S. Eliot, now in England.

The rest are English; Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay.

Poets who have also been critics: Bridges, Chesterton, Drinkwater, Eliot, Gosse, Gould, Masfield, Thomas, Turner, Yeats.

Poets whose main works belong exclusively to the nineteenth century: Stevenson, Thompson.

Poets whose main works belong exclusively to the twentieth century:

Brooke, Chesterton, Davies, De La Mare, Drinkwater, Eliot, Flecker, Gibson, Gould, Hodgson, Masfield, Owen, Stephens, Thomas, Turner.

The rest, five of whom are major poets, divide their works between the two centuries.

Note. Of about a dozen poetesses, some of them distinguished, none has been included in the Syllabus.

Characteristics of Modern Poetry under sixteen different heads.

1. STYLE AND DICTION

From the formal point of view modern poetry presents an immense variety. Examples:

Ode—The Hound of Heaven.

Lyric (regular)—The Linnet ; The Moon ; Stupidity Street.

Lyric (irregular)—Words.

Lyric (symbolic)—*La Figlia Che Piange*.

Narrative—*The Bull, Flannan Isle*.

Descriptive—*Midlands*.

Elegy—*Lacrymae Musarum*.

Sonnet—*The Dead*.

Didactic—*If—*

Religious—*The House of Christmas*.

Humorous—*Grantchester*.

A distinction may be made between irregular lyrics and free verse : *e. g.*, Thomas' 'Words' is an irregular lyric, so is 'The Dying Patriot' with unequal lines and suspended rhymes. 'La Figlia Che Piange' has 'I should find' in st. second unrhymed, besides having lines of unequal length. Modern anthologies do not countenance, perhaps rightly, much of free verse properly so called, only one by Charlotte Mew being included by Binyon, for example, in his *Golden Treasury*. Vol. II.

In diction contemporary poets are simpler than the Victorians. Unlike Wordsworth a hundred years ago Yeats has preached his gospel of the use of the best contemporary language in poetry; yet the ideal of 'art for art's sake' has no appeal for the moderns. Poems in dialect abound, but use of archaic words is not common. Sometimes pedantic zeal for avoiding the commonplace has resulted in outlandish collocations of words; but more often than not the majority of contemporary poets have been natural and true to life. In creating 'atmosphere' they are often remarkably successful; *e.g.*, *The Listeners* and *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. Above all, in suffusing poetry with local colour they are unsurpassed by any other age: which is at once a merit

and a drawback. As regards technique Bridges stand supreme, while Kipling is sometimes pompous, Davies tends to doggerel, Watson to empty rhetoric. Hardy at his best is music itself, so is Yeats; but the white heat of a soul on fire, though seen in flashes in Thompson, is almost absent from contemporary poetry.

"The chief danger of the modern poet", says Lynd, "is not indifference to form, but indifference to phrase." There are discernible, however, here and there, a few pregnant aphorisms which offer welcome relief: e.g.,

'With one wise friend, or one

Better than wise, being fair.'—*Watson*.

'Nothing begins, and nothing ends,

That is not paid with moan;'—*Thompson*.

'Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,

Lest we forget—lest we forget!'—*Kipling*.

'A rainbow and a cuckoo's song

May never come together again;'—*Davies*.

2. RELIGION

"Painting to-day has gone to the cafe", says Lynd, "but poetry lingers at the door of the Church." Indeed religion to-day is an all-pervading force, true universal religion freed from arid didacticism and trammels of dogma or sect. Thompson is the hierophant of ultramontane Catholic ritualism and its spiritual loyalties, Chesterton despite his amazing contortions and grotesquerie has composed one of the best hymns in English, Kipling has his 'Recessional', Stevenson his 'Celestial Surgeon', even Hardy his 'The Oxen', all sincerely exalting faith above sophistry. Stephens' 'Hate' has a deep spiritual significance—hate of hate and scorn of scorn. Poems on

Christ alone are pretty numerous; e.g., Gould's "The Happy Tree", Chesterton's "The House of Christmas," Graves's "In the Wilderness", Mrs. Shove's "The New Ghost", Mrs. Meynell's "Christ in the Universe", Campbell's "I am the Gilly of Christ". The grim irony of Hardy on the one hand and the unquestioning faith of Chesterton and Thompson on the other are the extremes between which fall semi-pagan idealists, Platonists, mystics, agnostics, none of them yet able completely to renounce all faith in Christ as a tremendous spiritual entity for all times. Head and shoulders above all stands Thompson whose magistral song of "The Hound of Heaven" proves the need of "heaven-sent moments for this skill" (*Vide Criticisms*). The author of the 'Anthem of Earth' was not a Wordsworthian, nor a vague symbolist, but a profound Christian for whom still.

'The angels keep their ancient places'.

3. WOMAN.

The romance of love has lost much of its glamour in these days of Freudians and feminists, but still a delightful presentation of this theme is found in 'Babylon', 'La Figlia Che Piange' and 'When you are old'. The sanctity of motherhood has been excellently brought out by 'The House of Christmas'; Mary Coleridge's 'A Mother to a Baby', and Mrs. Meynell's 'The Modern Mother'. Between Hardy's pagan 'Great Things' and Yeats's 'The Lover Tells of the Rose in his Heart' come infinite shades of difference of attitude of man towards woman. Plutocracy has made women victims of dollar-travel deals, but not like Bridges, Chesterton, Kip-

ling. Masfield, Thompson and Yeats have exalted her above the common light of day. Maidenhood, girlhood, motherhood and womanhood have been sources of great inspiration to poets of both sexes, particularly contemporary women have cast off the shyness and coyness of the Victorian era and there are signs of a healthy mutual understanding.

Davies' 'Where she is now, I cannot say', Masfield's 'Beauty', and May Doney's

'So, through her days' allotted span,
She yields and binds and spends her truth ;
The woman God has given to man—
The everlasting Ruth.'

are glowing tributes to graceful womanhood—a consecration.

4. LOVE.

The contemporary poetry of passion is cultured but not strong. Poets have adored the steady flame of love with diffidence and hesitancy, not with the passionate frenzy of the mighty Elizabethans nor even with the lacrymose outbursts of the Victorians. Browning and Meredith reappear without their fervour in many contemporary poets. Eliot, like his countryman Ezra Pound, is too intellectual to be popular and too technical to be sure of permanence. A frivolous picture of love is given by Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady",—

"But what have I, but what have I, my friend.
To give you, what can you receive from me ?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end "

More sincere and outspoken are the English poets.

Brooke's "all the little emptiness of love" above the keynote of contemporary poetry. Bridges' "Eros" condemns sexual love, and Meynell's "I must not think of thee" looks upon love as recreation for idle hours. But in spite of all disillusion a profound spirit of romance pervades many excellent love poems, *e.g.*, Abercrombie's 'Epilogue' to *Emblems of Love* in which love, like Shah Jahan's Taj Mahal, is

'Marble carried to a gleaming height
As moved aloft by inward delight'.

The tragedy of dead or unrequited love, the poignancy of evanescent love, the joys and regrets of past love are beautifully expressed in Symons' "O woman of my love?" 'Phillips' "I cannot look upon thy grave," Mary Coleridge's "Strange Power, I know not what thou art", Yeats's "Down by the salley gardens". Love as an irresistible life-force is well brought out by the exquisite lines of Bridges:

"Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life and sweet is breath."

5. THE CHILD.

Wordsworth's famous Ode, after Blake's Songs of Innocence, is the most glorious tribute to the child. With the theory of Original Sin and the revolt of the poets which is an imaginative echo of Christ's "Be like one of these", cf. Bridges'

"When I see childhood on the threshold seize
... ..

Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*."

"He cannot be a poet of experience", says Lynd, "unless he has first been a poet of innocence." Walter de la Mare is the Laureate of the Child par excellence: his "Peacock Pie" is "Alice in Wonderland" in verse. Kipling's "Jungle Books" contain excellent verse for children, e.g., "Road-Song of the Bandar Log"

Yeats's "The Stolen Child", with the refrain "Come away, O human child"; Brooke's, "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" (for its humour and naivete); Davies' "The Kingfisher"; Hodgson's "The Bull"; Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses"; "Turner's "Romance" are instances in point. Some women poets, e.g., Mary Coleridge and Alice Meynell are prominent for their tender and sympathetic attitude towards the child. "To Christina in Nightfall" of F. M. Ford says a little prosaically what Wordsworth expressed quite poetically:

"And I be Ancient Error, you New Truth".

Thompson's

"She knew not those sweet words she spoke,
Nor knew her own sweet way;"

Or Brown's

"She knelt upon her brother's grave,
My little girl of six years old—"

does not pale by comparison with Wordsworth's

"A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love".

✓ 6. MYSTICISM AND SYMBOLISM.

Mysticism may be defined as the dialectic of emotion,

and wears several aspects in contemporary poets, the most prominent being Yeats, "AE", and Stephens. The danger of mysticism is that it often fails to give 'airy, nothing a local habitation and a name' and loses itself in despair, vagueness and insignificance. The earlier and the later Yeats present two directly contrasting moods. The same is the case with "AE" and Stephens, both under the shadow of Oriental mysticism indicating as it were the sunset of the East. Wordsworth's pantheistic mysticism is more solid than that of Blake or Yeats, for the common tang of earth is never lost by him as a keen naturalist. The Catholic mysticism of Thompson is more easily understandable and in spite of his grandiloquent tropes and daring neologisms he never entirely loses hold of the truth that Earth and Heaven both have their anthems. The spiritual optimism of Bridges, Chesterton and Kipling has well saved them from the twilight world of dreams, fairies and folklore which are too irrational to be woven into a permanent fabric of thought.

Symbolism, which represents ideas by indirect suggestion rather than by direct expression, exists in every poetry more or less. Masfield's "Cargoes" represents the aesthetic aspects of commerce in three far-differing periods. John Drinkwater in his "Symbols" says

"I saw history in a poet's song,
In a river reach and a gallows-hill,
In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong.
In a crown of thorns : in a daffodil."

Davies' "The Example", "The Hawk", and "Thunderstorms", are remarkable examples of symbolism. "The

'Waste Places' of Stephens, 'The Bull' of Hodgson, 'The Celestial Surgeon' of Stevenson, 'Truth' of "A.E." and some lyrics in "The Wind Among the Reeds" of Yeats show symbolism from one extreme to the other.

7. The Mysterious and the Supernatural.

Science has not yet explored the whole realm of the mind and spirit of man. Mystery yet pervades life. Hardy's 'On a Midsummer Eve' describing how places are haunted by spirits of those who visited them in life and 'The Oxen', Hewlett's 'Night-errantry' showing how the soul takes leave of the body for some time, Gibson's 'Flannan Isle', De La Mare's 'Listeners', Thompson's 'In No Strange Land', and many of the 'dream' poems of Yeats, e.g., 'The Song of Wandering Aengus' are full of the romance of life and the spirit world. Harold Monroe's 'Solitude', Anna Wickham's 'The Cherry-blossom Wand', Sorley's 'Expectans Expectavi,'—

'And all year long upon the stage
I dance and tumble and do rage
So vehemently, I scarcely see
The inner and eternal me'.

Gibson's 'Haunted' describing a man perpetually troubled by a nightmare of shipwreck and bloodshed,—

'And I know not from what deep
Stirs the doom that breaks my sleep
To keep lykewake with the dead for ever-
more,

De La Mare's 'Haunted',—

'Rave how thou wilt; unmoved, remote,
That inward presence slumbers not,
Frets out each secret from thy breast,
Gives thee no rally, pause nor rest.'

are typical of the contemporary mind and perhaps in no other period of modern history have the mystery of human personality and eerie visions of life on earth and beyond evoked lyrics of a haunting beauty that will last for ever.

8. Romance and Realism.

A stereotyped classification of all poets into romantics and realists is not possible: Hardy, Kipling, Masfield and Thompson are both, according to their mood; even Yeats as a revivalist and nationalist has something of the realist in him, while Eliot with all his scholastic lore, irony, humour, and aestheticism is only an inverted romanticist, who in his 'Waste Land', for example, gives the lie to his own theory that 'poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality'. Eliot and Yeats represent the two extremes and all other poets fall between them. The soldier-poets gradually move from the romance to the realism of war: Catholic poets like Chesterton and Thompson living in the heart of Protestantism betray the fervency of their faith in the romance of Catholicism; the Irish poets swayed by Oriental mysticism and love of dreams, fairies and folklore, live in a twilight world of their own; De La Mare and Stevenson with their enthusiasm for child-life, and Davies with his untutored genius and sense of wonder, seem to belong to the last age of romanticism more or less; Kipling, the most practical of all, has explored the five nations and the seven seas while Flecker is profoundly attracted by the Orient; Masfield's accurate analysis of the diseases of democracy is yet combined with equally enthusiastic excursions into the mysteries of human personality: Hardy, deeply influenced

by science and philosophy and stern realist as he is, is none the less a believer in the world of the unseen; Bridges, a classic by temperament, has left his 'Testament of Beauty' which harks back to the age of Keats or even Spenser. The lesser poets sometimes 'escape' into the world of romance as a temporary diversion,—a string of words, a magic landscape, a squirrel's nest, a charcoal-burner and so on. Contemporary poetry is essentially more realistic than romantic. Cf. Eliot's grim realism in

"We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw."

with C. Day Lewis's hope for the future in
"Move then with new desires,
For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live
Between two fires."

9. HUMOUR.

Humour has never been absent from English poetry. In pure verbal fun and racy slang Kipling surpassed a his contemporaries, e.g.,

"You put some *juldee* in it
Or I'll *marrow* you this minute".

(*Gunga Din*)

The quaint humour of 'The Donkey', the healthy humour that pervades 'Grantchester', the gentle humour of 'The Oxen', the ingenuous fondness for place-names in 'Romance' are no mean examples. Hardy's 'Satires of Circumstance' and 'Time's Laughing-stocks' tell an altogether different

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tale. The parodies of J. C. Squire are remarkably clever. Deane's 'The Ballad of the *Billycock*' is an excellent parody of the patriotic ballads of Newbolt,

"For making which you merely take some dauntless
Englishmen,
Guns, heroism, slaughter, and a fleet,
Ingredients you mingle in a metre with a jingle,
And there you have your masterpiece complete!"

Humbert Wolfe's

"Why should a man,
though six foot tall,
think he matters
at all, at all?"

(*The Rose*)

and Edith Sitwell's

"'Not a crumb', said Min,
To a mouse I'll be giving,
For a mouse must spin
To earn her living.'"

(*Spinning Song*)

are absolutely as innocent instances as they are simple.

10. NATURE.

Poetry is always personal: no two poets betray the same attitude to Nature. Three attitudes may be roughly distinguished from one another,—(1) Pagan, (2) Philosophical, and (3) Christian or Sensuous (Keats), meditative (Wordsworth) and religious (Thompson) respectively. The poet of to-day seems to look upon himself as part of Nature; cf. Watson's 'Ode in May',

"Magnificent out of the dust we came
And abject from the spheres".

According to Davidson "Man is but the Universe grown conscious." Man's oneness with Nature has not been more admirably expressed than by Hardy in his "Trans-

formations" and "The Wind Blew Words." To Hardy Nature is an instrument of the Immanent Will, "as one who does not scatter kindnesses and cruelties alternately, impartially, and in order, but heartless severities or overwhelming generousities in lawless caprice" (Brennecke); while to Wordsworth she is the beneficent Nurse of the human child, saying

'This child I to myself will take.' To Thompson as an orthodox Christian Nature is but the handiwork of God where

'The angels keep their ancient places'.

Of the minor poets the most charming is perhaps Davies whose lyrics of nature show that he is truly "Nature's Friend." The modern poets have rediscovered England to her lovers and are more concerned "with the immediate joy of the eye" (Lynd). Now, more than ever, it is impossible to understand the poetry of Britain unless one is acquainted with her sea, sky and landscape; e.g., *Romney Marsh, Midlands, The Charcoal-Burner*. Besides, animals, birds, plants and flowers have been described with an accuracy and enthusiasm hitherto unparalleled. Shakespeare's Northumberland is as good as a district of North Bengal: Hardy's Wessex belongs to England alone. But in spite of the modern poet's love of life out of doors, do we come across the rapture of Shelley, the verbal magic of Keats or any considerable approach to the calm philosophy of Wordsworth's

"One impulse from a vernal wood

May teach you more of man,

Of moral evil and of good

Than all the sages can."

even in his best work?

11. THE SEA.

The call of the sea is persistent in contemporary poetry. The present Laureate may rightly be called the Laureate of the Sea, being an experienced sailor himself. (Cf. *Salt-Water Ballads*, Dauber). His *The Wanderer* is perhaps the best sea poem in English. Kipling's *The Seven Seas* and other sea poems tingle with salt spray. Another poet who is powerfully attracted by the sea is Davies. Bridges' *A Passer-by*. Gibson's *Flannan Isle*, Flecker's *A Ship, an Isle, a Sickle Moon*, Hopwood's *The Old Way*; Moore's *Tempio di Venere*, Newbolt's sea-ballads, Eva Gore-Booth's *The Little Waves of Breffny*, Moore's 'Put out to sea, if wine thou wouldst make' vividly represent the romance and realism of the Sea. Also,

I will hold my house in the high wood

Within a walk of the sea,

And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall drink and sit with me.

—Belloc.

Oh ! What know they of harbours

Who toss not on the sea !

—Radford.

The hills look over on the South,

And southward dreams the sea ;

And, with sea-breeze hand in hand

Came innocence and she.

—Thompson.

12. ANIMALS.

The Christian religion is often charged with organised cruelty to animals. However that may be, contemporary poetry shows a special tenderness and pity towards

animals. It is most characteristic in Hardy. Pity for game-birds as in Hodgson's 'Stupidity Street', for animals pursued to death in Davidson's 'A Runnable Stag', the mysterious habit of "The Oxen" of Hardy, kneeling on Christmas eve, Chesterton's self-conscious 'Donkey', the human friendship of Squire's 'Bull-dog,' Monro's 'Milk for the Cat' show the humanitarian mood of contemporary poets. Perhaps no other poet has so sympathetically studied the animal mind as Hodgson in his 'The Bull.' Brooke's 'The Fish', and Stephens' 'The Square' are sympathetic projections into the animal mind. Contemporary poetry is no less rich in its treatment of bird life and bird mind, e.g., Bridges' and De La Mare's 'The Linnet', Davies' 'The Hawk' Hardy's, 'The Darkling Thrush, Sorley's 'Rooks',—

'Perhaps no man, until he dies,
Will understand them, what they say'.

Davies' 'The Dog' and 'Sheep', Colum's 'Wild Ass', Wolfe's 'Lamb' and Dearmer's 'The Turkish Trench Dog' who is 'An open ally of the human race' are also note worthy examples. But the greatest triumph is in Chesterton's 'The Donkey,'—

'There was a shout about my years,
And palms before my feet.'

13. SCIENCE AND METAPHYSICS.

Many contemporary poets, major and minor, have come under the influence of science. The unity of creation has not been better and more poetically expressed than in Thompson's

"Thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star."

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The sense of the antiquity of man is nowhere more finely described than in De La Mare's 'All that's past',

"Very old are we men:"

or in Alice Meynell's

"Before this life began to be

The happy songs that wake in me

Woke long ago and far apart."

The law of heredity is summed up in the significant lines of Kipling:

"Cleanse and call home thy spirit,

Deny her leave to cast,

On aught thy heirs inherit,

The shadow of the past".

The influence of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and of Nietzsche is distinctly traceable in the poetry of Hardy and Davidson, that of the Hindu philosophy and pantheistic mysticism in Yeats, "AE" and Stephens, the philosophy of disillusion and nihilism in the ironical moods of Eliot, Christian mysticism in Thompson, and spiritual optimism in Bridges. But genuine poetry cannot let itself be 'sick-limed over with the pale cast of thought'. Masfield's

"An earthly thing were better like the rose,

At peace with clay from which its beauty grows."

contains more poetry and philosophy than the little systems that come and go.

14. POLITICS AND THE ZEITGEIST.

The power of democracy has made itself felt in contemporary poetry more than that of radicalism (Watson, for example), socialism (Gould) or conservatism (Kipling). Poetry has now become of the people and for the people.

The scope of its themes has been indefinitely enlarged. Masfield has consecrated the poor and the destitute, Gibson has introduced a new tenderness for the suffering proletariat. Masfield is perhaps the greatest (representative) poet of the people at present. Davies has tried an amazing variety of subjects impossible in an undemocratic age. The aloofness of Yeats from contemporary politics has not proved altogether for the good of his poetry nor the patriotic pre-occupation of Kipling with too much of imperial politics; midway stands Thomas Hardy whose

"Yet this will go onward the same
Though dynasties pass."

is saner than much of Kiplingese rhodomontade. Rupert Brooke has steered clear of jingoism by his genial humour (Cf. the free-and-easy life of England with the stern regimentation of Prussia in 'Grantchester'). Flecker's

"I care not if you bridge the seas,
Or ride secure the cruel skies";

or Bottomley's 'To Iron-founders and others', with

"When you destroy a blade of grass
You poison England at her roots."

and Masfield's 'Cargoes' are bold criticisms of, the dirt and squalor that belong to contemporary life.

15. PATRIOTISM AND WAR.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori, says Horace. Patriotism is evident in English poetry from Chaucer to Kipling. Excess of patriotism, however undesirable, is much healthier than a vague internationalism. In the last Great War there were several soldier poets of whom Brooke is the noblest simply as a poet:—

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"If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England."

Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas, C. H. Sorley were all killed in action leaving behind them genuine patriotic poetry. R. Nichols, disabled by shell shock, published his first volume of poems, *Innovations*, while he was at the front; there also survive Sassoon, Graves, and Hueffer. Post-War poetry is characterised by disillusionment as in Eliot. Irish patriotism had its champion in W. B. Yeats, but he was more a devotee of art than of his country. There are some fine patriotic poems by the elders and non-belligerents like Kipling, Watson, and Gibson. The danger of patriotism is a lapse into jingoism for which even Shakespeare, not to mention Kipling, has been blamed. But there is now a new love of England and the English countryside. Much of patriotic poetry is pure journalism, yet read and compare the following lines of Kipling and Byron substituting your own land for England:—

"There is but one task for all—

For each one life to give.

Who stands if freedom fall?

Who dies if England live?"

"Lift up thy cause into the light !

Put all the factious lips to shame !

Our loves, our faiths, our hopes unite

And strike into a single flame!"

16. TRAVEL.

The restlessness of twentieth-century life is well expressed in its poetry.

'And East and West the wander-thirst that will not let
me be'

says Gould. The romance of the East has, or indirectly to the West by Kipling and Flecker, e.g.,

'By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward -
'There's a Burmah girl a-settin', an' I know she th^{for}ll^{o' me}.
and

I am the Gate that fears no fall: the Mihrab of Damascus Wall,

The bridge of booming Sinai: the Arch of Allah all in all.'

Brooke, Davies (the Super-tramp), Flecker, Kipling, Masfield, Stevenson, Thomas (the modern 'Scholar Gipsy'), and Turner have been great travellers. The patriot often returns home to find it lovelier and more charming than ever, as the present Poet Laureate says of Beauty:

I have heard the song of the blossoms and the old chant of the sea,

And seen strange lands from under the arched white sails of ships;

But the loveliest things of beauty God ever has showed to me,

Are her voice, and her hair, and eyes, and the dear red curve of her lips.

—:o:—

Some memorable sentences from Robert Lynd's *Introduction (On Poetry and the Modern Man)*.

Poetry was born, like Beatrice, under a dancing star.

In poetry we are continually being re-born into new fairylands.

He cannot be a poet of experience unless he has first been a poet of innocence .

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poetry is to make the life of man more

(xxxv)

offers us not only an escape from life but an escape
life.

Longingness is the beginning of poetry, whether in
the nursery or the grown man.

Every poet has his own net and his own draught of
fishes.

Great poetry is not the expression of collective feeling.
It is the speech of soul to soul.

Painting to-day has gone to the cafe, but poetry lingers
at the door of the church.

—:0:—

Three famous definitions of poetry.

1. Simple, sensuous, impassioned. —Milton.

2. The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
heaven;

And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. —Shakespeare.

3.quae (poesis) nihil aliud est quam fictio
rhetorica musicaque composita.

L'uno si chiama (1) *litterale* (literal); l'altro si
chiama (2) *allegorico* (allegorical); il terzo senso si
chiama (3) *morale* (moral); lo quarto senso si chiama
(4) *anagogico*, (anagogic or mystical) cioè sovra
senso—the highest sense.

Dante.—

—:0:—

Explanations of some words directly or indirectly referred to in the Commentary.

Aesthetic Movement. The, a movement started in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with 'art for art's sake' as its motto; espoused later on by Oscar Wilde and his followers, and ridiculed by Gilbert, George du Maurier and others.

Decadent, originally one of a school of French writers of the end of the nineteenth century, whose work betrays tastes and motives characteristic of decadent or hypercivilized society, e.g., Baudelaire; also applied to English writers and artists like Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and others whose work was characterized by artificial polish, brilliant wit and a certain degree of effeminacy.

Edwardian, belonging to the first decade of the present century (Edward VII, 1901-10), frequently used as implying a reaction from some of the tendencies of the Victorian era. It is an age of reason and criticism rather than of original contribution.

Fin de siècle, (French) literally, 'end of the age' especially, end of the nineteenth century in Europe; often used adjectivally to mean up-to-date or decadent. (see above).

Georgianism, in poetry it implies certain gentlemanly qualities, often combined with sentimental patriotism and a quiet love of nature usually preferring to avoid any emphatic expression of emotion or intensity of feeling.

Georgian Poetry, an anthology of contemporary poetry started in 1912 by Rupert Brooke, Harold Monro,

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W. W. Gibson, John Drinkwater, and others to which contributions were made by many distinguished poets of the period (1912-22) including Davies, De La Mare, Flecker, Masfield, A. E. Housman, Hodgson and others.

Imagism, a reaction against certain aspects of Victorian poetry, initiated during the Great War, which mainly concerned itself with presenting distinct 'images' instead of undefined generalities. D. H. Lawrence and F. S. Flint are its well-known advocates in England.

Mysticism, the tendency or power to perceive Reality immediately, that is, without intervening media such as revelation, reasoning, prophecy or ordinance of traditional religion, but directly in ecstasy, trance or vision, as well as intuitively.

Nostalgia. (Greek) *nostos*—return home, and *algos*.—grief, i.e., homesickness or desire to return home, sometimes amounting to a form of melancholia.

Parnassian School. The, a group of French romantic poets (from *Le Parnasse contemporain*) of the latter half of the nineteenth century. whose ideal was 'art for art's sake' emphasizing metrical form and making little use of emotion as poetic material.

Post-War Poetry, represents a reaction from the Georgian School, already initiated during the Great War by the Imagists and conducted on different lines by the Sitwells (Edith, Sacheverell and Osbert), Eliot and their followers.

Sitwellismus, a term, used rather as a reproach, signifying the reaction from Victorian and Georgian poetry led by the Sitwells (see above). It is

characterized by the use of bold imagery and metaphor, adapting poetry to music and communicating sensation rather than 'emotion recollected in tranquillity.

Symbolists, a school of French poets who arose in the last decade of the nineteenth century. They aimed at rendering their inward experiences by indirect suggestion rather than by direct expression. Unlike the Parnassians (see above) they claimed great liberties of form and vocabulary.

Victorian, in literature, art, politics etc., applied to anything typical of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837—1901), characterized by exaggerated conventionalism, self-complacency and a deficient sense of humour.

War Poets, poets inspired by the Great War of 1914-18, e.g., Sorley, Sassoon, Brooke, Owen, Nichols and others. With a few exceptions they subsequently lapsed either into pacifism or patriotic pomposities.

"A. E." (GEORGE RUSSELL) : "BABYLON"

Summary :

It is lamplighting time in an Irish city; the lover regarding his lass thinks of that other city 3000 years ago, that is, over a million days before. Temples and palaces then were roofed with gold leaf. As the setting sun's rays, reflected there, fade in the gathering darkness, the stars appear. The oriental night was mysterious as he walked below the dim towering splendid buildings through gardens (the "Hanging Gardens" were one of the wonders of the world). He seems to hear the plash of fountains and smell lilies and hear soft voices. He recognises the voice of his lass. As (in real modern life) she puts her hand on his, he wakes to reality. Luxury and material splendours pass, but love is everlasting, it is "calm and proud", that is, undisturbed by temporal events, and above and beyond dishonour.

Meanings:

Line 5 burnished—shining.

7 sparkle—twinkling light.

8 myriad—ten thousand kinds of (Greek).

10 jets—throws up in a thin stream.

10 pallid—pale.

11 lull—make me sleepy (compare lullaby).

14 phantom—ghostly (suggesting time as a human illusion).

18 procession—solemn movement

Metaphors:

In any other poet they would seem hackneyed, the *wings* of thought, line one, and *tide* of time. lines fourteen and fifteen; it is the genius of "A. E." that they seem exactly right and helpful. One other, the *tower* of heaven (line seven) refers to the way in which in the Near East, owing to dryness, the sky seems more lofty, farther away, than in Britain or India.

The writer:

Gerald Bullett says: "one...genuine mystic... when spurious mysticism is as common as measles." (spurious—counterfeit, like bad money.) Most western children catch measles; many western poets like to *mystify* without any real feeling or conviction that "there are more things in heaven and earth than this world dreams of".
(Shakespeare).

Interpretation:

Note that 'A.E.' does *not* postulate (say that there surely is) re-incarnation. He implies, rather, that the lapse of centuries, which seems to make Babylon so far separated from us, does not really exist.

We must remember that for the original readers, those who are familiar with Ireland, the contrast is much heightened; nobody who has seen that country finds it easy to imagine luxury, splendour or magnificence there; and the extreme humidity (damp) prevents "glamour."

Metre:

The poem is printed in rhymed couplets of eight accents, generally sixteen syllables, to each line; but each line is really two of four accents each. ("Iambic tetrameters.") Lines 7, 8, 9, have extra unaccented syllables;

line 6 varies the position of the accents; line 13 're-al' has to be two distinct syllables; the remaining fourteen lines are exactly according to the model; yet such is the skill of the poet that we do not find them monotonous. Note *alliteration* in line 8.

Criticisms

The poetry of "A. E." (George William Russell), though it has greatness in simplicity lacking in the poetry of more complex emotions significant of Mr. Yeats's character, is by no means entirely typical of those traits associated with the Celtic temper. His poems are hortatory, joyous and optimistic. In rhythm and metre he follows the standards set by Tennyson and Swinburne. To art he owes little; but his slender volumes carry with them the soul of poetry in their rapture, their spiritual exaltation, their glad consciousness of kinship between the mind of man and the moods of earth. The recurring *motif* of many of his poems shows that his inspiration has come to him not through the broad channels of English poetry, but from pagan Ireland, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and the mystics of all ages. According to Mr. Yeats he is "the one poet of modern Ireland who has moulded a spiritual ecstasy in verse." In the beauty and power of a spiritual fervour no poetry of to-day, not that of Francis Thompson, has the skiey light and depth of the work of "A. E.". The ideas of pantheistic philosophy are in all his poems; for him there is no gulf between the physical and the spiritual. Earth is a never-failing source of inspiration to the poetry of "A. E."The elusive rhythms, the esotericism, the wistfulness of Mr. Yeats are exchanged in "A. E." for a powerful spiritual exaltation.

—Williams.

"A. E." has revealed himself as a great poet by a work limited in scope, but full of intense beauty. He has enriched life with great pantheistic ecstasies. In his poetry he celebrates the procession of deities and the unity of solar forces as subject to one supreme power. He exhorts man to discover the oneness underlying the interpenetrating Milky Ways of light. He appeals as strongly to intellect as to emotion.

—*Lalou.*

Unlike Mr. Yeats he does not allow his ideas to encroach upon his poetry. If Mr. Yeats is more symbolist; than mystic, "A. E." is more mystic than symbolist; but his mysticism does not lead him to nothingness as does that of Mr. Yeats; in his case dream exalts life and action instead of stifling them. He is called the Emerson of Ireland, pursuing his ideal like the Sage of Concord and imbued likewise with pantheism and adoration for the "divine dream" which is the world and always talking of the Spirit and suggesting the Absolute:

—*Paul-Dubois.*

Laurence Binyon:

"FOR THE FALLEN" (meaning the dead in the 1914-1918 war)

Summary:

England, mother of those who died fighting far away, even as she mourns, is proud of them, and thankful to God. For it was for freedom, of which England treasures not only the form (representative government) but the spirit (reverence for human personality) that they fell.

The music of the ceremonial of a memorial service first seems dignified, awe-inspiring, and grand; then we are conscious of its beauty (and beauty does not die), its power to comfort the bereaved, and the nobleness of self-sacrifice.

The young soldiers in their strength went to their death singing, and met it without weakness or fear, though often much outnumbered.

We, alive, get older and feebler; they, dead, do not know what weariness and shame are like. It is good for us to think of them night and morning.

True, they are not with us in our pleasures, our meals, or our round of duties, being buried far away; but the things we care most about and long for are just what they cared most about and died for; and their memory, because they were faithful unto death, will endure and inspire mankind as long as the stars shall shine.

Meanings:

Line 5 AUGUST: (not pronounced like the month, but with the second syllable stressed) majestic.

7 desolation—land laid waste, deserted (meaning mourners).

10 aglow—lit up, as it were shining with noble purpose.

11 staunch—steadfast, unyielding

17 mingle—mix.

19 lot—share.

20 foam—white bubbles on the sea, where the waves break.

21 profound—deep.

22 well-spring—that is, the water that springs up at the bottom.

Appreciation:

This threnody (death-song) or panegyric (praise of the dead) owes its very great effectiveness to the universality of the sentiment, the simplicity of the language, a very subtle and skilful use of metrical variation (see below) and a true poetic gift of melody: the syllables sing themselves. The main conceptions, freedom, self-sacrifice, tradition (handing down or remembrance of famous deeds) and the imperishable quality of all these, expressed in the closing simile of the stars everlastingly wheeling like regiment on the march, are all derived, and not entirely subconsciously, from the background and foundation of the current English language itself, the Authorised Version (1603) of the English Bible. Especially, (besides the simile, already mentioned, which comes from the Book of Daniel) may be remarked the use of simple words, often of only one syllable, which seem to become plainer as the meaning intensifies, clearer as their depth is increased: consider in this light lines 12, 13, and 24, where the veil is lifted

ever so slightly and the stern self-restraint that hides almost unbearable emotion is relaxed, only to the extent of allowing the simplest possible phrase, "to the end", to be repeated. Abruptly, the voice is silent; the rest is left to imagination.

Metre :

Quatrains (stanzas of four lines), three of four accents, the last of three only. The long lines vary from ten to fourteen syllables, the last from six to nine. This is because the classical "feet" of spondees and dactyls (two heavy syllables "England", "we that", or one heavy and two light, "mother for", "cause of the"), are used as well as the familiar iamb "aglow" and other combinations, such as the anapaest (short-short-long, as "to the night", "they remain"). A line of four "feet" of three syllables each, with the addition, common since Shakespeare, of a "catalectic" or extra syllable at the end is much longer than one of four spondees or iambs, but has no more primary accents.

Criticisms.

"His limitation is that he is seldom passionate and never less than serious".—*Newbolt*.

Mr. Binyon's verse has by no means the constant note of unconscious and unpremeditated song; he gains his ends deliberately, with self-knowledge, and in less than half his writing does he escape an attitude of chilly and academic detachment. He is, therefore, more the poet when he departs from everyday life to kingdoms of myth, mysticism or pure imagination. He is never sufficiently in contact with the stress and bustle of a rough

and hard-driven world—in short, his poetry is always a little remote from his subject.

—*Williams.*

He is Matthew-Arnoldish, having an imaginative vision and verbal felicity. His genius is essentially epic. His poetry is not uniformly excellent and there are more evidences of effort than inspiration in his work. Romantic and imaginative vision is more suited to his talent. He may rank among the foremost narrative poets of his generation.

—*Archer.*

Robert Bridges : A Passer-by & The Linnet.

Summaries :

(1) A ship is seen towards the sunset in full sail, which implies that it is in no danger from storms. The poet enquires where it is going and for what object. Perhaps, presently, when the poet's ship (liner?) has landed him in the chill damp and storms of an English winter, the passing ship will be sailing the ocean whose very name means peaceful, or in a sunny southern harbour.

The poet sees himself there, among the spices, watching the passing ship reach a haven, finer than all the others, grander than the snowy mountain-top that is seen in the distance.

Yet, he reminds himself, he may be quite mistaken; he has not hailed the passing ship and does not know her name. But the very sight of her now is so beautiful that he cannot feel he has exaggerated (made too much of it).

(2) The poet heard a linnet making love; he is afraid words cannot do justice to the song. To human ears, it might seem to be only one note, one word, "Come." Gaily, sweetly, tenderly, he invited the loved one to come—to what? To love and home. And she answered by echoing his song. "Come, Come." We may think ourselves wiser, but we lack their courage and confidence, and fail to reach such happiness.

Meanings :

(1) Line 2 urgent—pressing (used symbolically).

10 inhaling—breathing in.

odorous—fragrant, perfumed.

11 unerringly—guided exactly to the right place without any mistake.

13 awnings—coverings as shelter from the sun.

26 aslant—leaning, "heeled over" by the wind.

tackle & shrouding—names of different ropes in the rigging.

28 offing—the part of the horizon beyond or behind.

(2) misfeatures, line 24, what may go wrong, misfortunes.

The writer:

He was poet laureate; like Milton, a "poets' poet", that is, only the skilled can appreciate his skill. "beautiffully chiselled, polished and musical stanzas" (Bullett); "the versatility of a master", "luminous with individual style". In "A Passer-by" "*skilfully varied rhythms..suggest.. the ship's motion.*"

Metre:

(1) eight-line stanzas of iambic decasyllables (10-syll) but richly diversified by competent technical devices. The scheme of rhymes is ABABBCBC. Constant alliteration, and sound imitating water on a ship's side. (17 s-sounds in the first stanza)

(2) Seven lines in a stanza, syllables 7.6.7.6.4.7.4 (iambics with extra syllables, catalectic, in long lines)

Appreciation:

(see "The Writer" above) It is a sound critical instinct that has led Mr. Methuen to juxtapose (put side by side) these two poems. They illustrate delightfully the power of the late Laureate to picture widely different aspects of

nature; in the one, oceanic scenery; in the other, birds in an English garden. It is true that the Passer-by herself, in all her breath-taking loveliness, is the work of man; but it is her surroundings, the beat and heave of the surges in the first stanza, the tropic island harbour in the second, that give a base for the memorable contrast. The Linnæus is artless in his wooing; and the poet's song is artless too—with the simplicity that conceals great art. If anyone thinks that this "jingle" rhythm is easy, let him try. Here again there is human frustration, a sense of longing and inadequacy, made explicit, in three stanzas as to the poet's own interpretation, and (skilfully) in the last, our general failure to realise even natural perfection in mating, through sophistication (thinking we know too much, and unable to trust).

Criticisms.

There is an interesting contrast between Thompson and Bridges as nature poets. Thompson's poetry contains no minute detail and resembles that of Wordsworth in this respect, but he catches the imaginative essence more than Thompsons. Thompson's view of sacerdotal Nature is subservient to a supreme will.

He often sounds like a prosodical gramophone. His actual achievements are small when compared with those of Hopkins, Thompson, Doughty and Yeats.

He cannot penetrate into the rarest regions of verbal magic. He is a delightful poet of cultured happiness and middle-class refinement and among the best of English poets of typically English scenery.

—Megroz.

His poetry shows a metrical variety which it would be hard to match in any other poet.....His renderings of English landscape are as pure and direct and as truly impassioned as those of Gray and Arnold, and only less moving than Wordsworth's. All his art is offered as tribute to ideal beauty; all his soul streams out in a creative passion, as he evokes from the silence awaiting the revelation an image of that interior beauty. He has a finer sense of rhythm than Tennyson. He does not regard the world as fashioned for the sole delight of man ...Both joy and sorrow are but links of his personal relation to life and the problems of life. His attitude, in short, is one of passivity or quietism.

—*Freeman.*

Mr. Bridges is certainly a passionate writer; yet the passion has light without heat. There are no scarlets, no purples in his work. It expresses no thrill of wonder, no strange apocalypse of beauty.....the work of Mr. Bridges is essentially the work of a sensitive scholar who dallies delicately with the simplicity and complexity of Nature and of Art, shrinking from robust expression and fervent rapture as something noisy and distasteful.

—*Compton-Rickett.*

Mr. Bridges has never felt with sufficient intensity to be a great poet...His lyrics are the work of the scholar, the recluse and the parodist, gifted with a true and constant but not a strong emotional response to life. Mr. Bridges is peculiarly an English poet; and English in a more homely sense than ever was Tennyson. For the subject of his verse he turns to those joys of everyday life that lie nearest to hand—memories, friendships, dreams and especially the joy of the countryside; the beauty of

the flowering bank, the June meadow, the winter thicket, the world stretching away from the foot of the hill hardly any nature poetry is more simply descriptive than that of Mr. Bridges.

—*Williams.*

Mr. Bridges' art is made for simple thoughts, and direct, though delicate, emotions; these it renders with a kind of luminous transparency; when the thought or emotion becomes complex the form becomes complicated, and all the subtlety of its simplicity goes out of it, as a new kind of subtlety comes in...If the quality of Mr. Bridges' poetry, apart from its many qualities as an art, were to be summed up in a word, there is but one word, I think, which we could use, and that word is wisdom; and for the quality of his wisdom there is again but one word, the word temperance.

—*Symons.*

Rupert Brooke: *The Dead* (sonnet)

Summary :

Those we have lost were ordinary folk, in their happiness and sorrow, which cleansed them as it does others. They liked their joke, and had learnt sympathy by experience. Like us, they knew that nature could be beautiful, and art also. Love and the soul's awakening, contemplative solitude, all our experience was theirs—once. Sometimes a lake, beneath changing winds, ripples as it reflects the sunlight all day; night comes, and with it frost. The lake is frozen over. Now it can no more ripple; but with a single white spread of ice it gives back the moonlight undisturbed.

Notes:

1. Line 1 woven (past participle, of weave). The textile metaphor of the pattern of experience is common, as also in nouns 'warp' and 'woof'.
2. Washed—Sorrow and pain are frequently regarded as purgative in effect.
- 3 years had given that is, their experience made them kind, dawn was theirs...they knew how beautiful it was: they did not go to fight because life was not worth living, but to save what was worth while for others.
- 6 gone proudly friended—one is proud of one's close friends.
- 8 touched flowers and furs and cheeks—appreciated beauty in society.
- 9 laughter "Laughing Water" is a metaphor in both hemispheres.

10 rich skies—rich because golden with winter sun.

11 gesture—the swift action of frost is compared to an order signalled by hand.

12 wandering loveliness—typical phrase of this poet exactly describing the constant movement of the wind-swept surface, and also the wide and previously *undirected* scope of the powers of appreciation of the young men who became soldiers.

13 glory—not too strong a word for moonlight on ice.

gathered radiance—The reflection is concentrated,
14 although a width. at the same time occurring over a broad surface.

15 a shining peace—nothing could seem more undisturbed.

The Author:

Died at the age of 28 while on active service.

A lover of Cambridge and of youth. His notable gifts are those of pregnant phrase, memorable lines, and perfect smoothness in traditional metres, as here

Metre:

the fourteen lines of a sonnet, rhyming ABABCDOD
EEFGFG (iambic pentameters or decasyllables).

Nature: War: the Supernatural:

In Rupert Brooke's poetry, as in Robert Bridges', beauty in nature is first taken for granted, then described, always with economy, though Brooke uses adjectives that glitter like jewels, and Bridges, the greater poet, takes ordinary, almost obvious, epithets, and uses them with such perfect aptness that they are crystal windows enlarging our view of reality. Brooke's popularity is tremendous in war-time, because (a) he makes the will

and purpose of the democracies, determined to save their comparatively simple and sociable way of living, articulate : (b) out of his own vivid appreciation and awareness he conjures up so clear a recollection of fields and flowers, rivers and lakes, trees and skies of peace, that they comfort us who are cut off from such things. His religion too is the mellow agnosticism of an older culture, not the harsh juvenile assertions and denials of less virile and more self-conscious poets. On the surface, it is ill-bred as well as unwise to take oneself too seriously; inner conviction burns all the brighter for restraint in expression and a tolerant and humorous acceptance of man as he is, beliefs and all. This is very noticeable in the following poem, where German Kultur and regimentation, English casualness, classicism, conservatism, insularity, parochialism, superstition—all are the targets of undergraduate humour and a light but understanding satire. One can be quite sure that he loves, not hates, behind the delicate mockery.

Rupert Brooke (2)

Grantchester (Vicarage is a Vicar's House, see note, line 60).

Summary :

It is hot and uncomfortable in early summer in Berlin in a Bierhaus (beer-house) where one sits principally surrounded by Jews (that was because he was an obvious intellectual). The poet remembers the flowering shrubs and plants in his garden at home. The river (Cam) was cool and beautiful. The flowers grow in careless profusion but in Germany in rows like soldiers drilling. Even the

English weather is unexpected, and pleasanter for that. Maybe, as the Classics say, Pan still lives in the unspoiled countryside; at any rate, it is easy to make *history* live; the great Lord Byron, Dan Chaucer (of *Canterbury Tales*), Tennyson some centuries later, and Churchmen galore (any number). All this one can picture, sleeping out of doors in that Cambridge countryside, where immemorial buildings never quite collapse. Of course (HERE FOLLOW JOKES) actual Cambridge townsmen are cunning, the various villagers are full of strange oaths, or perverse, or silly; or they have some dark unmentionable secret.....but not Grantchester, where everything is ideal, even if the suicide rate is a little high ... (NOW SERIOUS AGAIN) The trees and the river, sunset and dawn there are "unforgettable, unforgotten" where one may see Beauty and Quietude, and have one's doubts (of the goodness of the universe) resolved. (HUMOUR) The Church clock had stopped at 2. 50 and nobody bothered to repair it; but the simple Vicarage afternoon meal generally included honey, which childlike people love.

Notes :

Lilac : a flowering tree, so is chestnut, line 7.

Line 4 carnation, pink } flowers popular in country
6 poppy, pansy } gardens.

7 There, in England; Here, in Germany; the poem refers to Germany and England.

9 tunnel : the chestnut trees have so much foliage that there is no daylight to be seen between the branches, one overlapping the next.

13 Oh, damn : the young man is homesick, so he swears. Homesickness (Greek, nostalgia) and

death are the two leading themes of western poetry. Love is a bad third.

14 golden and

✓ 16 gild: in May. green fields are filled with yellow buttercups and the sunshine produces a golden effect.

17 Du lieber Gott: O thou dear God: mild German oath.

21 Temperamentvoll: literally, full of temperament, that is, behaving according to their German-Jewish nature (noisily).

25 Unkempt: not cut to pattern. as German flowers have to be.

26 Unofficial: } in Germany. even the heavenly
27 Unregulated: } bodies seem to share the general
28 Unpunctual: } Prussian precision and to obey
copious orders! But in England
they can take it easy!

32 Das Betreten's not verboten: walking is not forbidden. In German das Betreten ist verboten means trespassers will be prosecuted.

33 Eithe genoimen (transliterated) stock Greek form of nostalgic wish, i.e., would I were.

38 Faun—playful woodland monster of Greek mythology.

40 Naiad—water-spirit of the same.

41 Goat-foot is Pan, the God of nature in the raw.

52 Hellespont, Lord Byron swam the Hellespont; Styx is the principal river of the dead, boundary of Hades (Greek).

- 51 Grantchester Mill, long since gone, is mentioned in Chaucer's works.
- 55 Tennyson. Alfred, Lord—Victorian poet laureate.
- 60 Vicars are one of the two sorts of English parish priests.
- 61 Curate: are their assistants, more work, less pay.
- 64 Rural Dean, the ecclesiastical dignitary who principally afflicts Vicars and Curates. In life he would be the last person to appear *slp*, a comic adjective of the phantasy.
- 66 Satanic—it is a favourite joke in ecclesiastical circles that most clerics go to Hell; so their ghosts would be Satanic.
- 68 Sleeper-out: it was Charles II who used to thank God for the English climate, "in which a man may sleep outdoors every night of the year, and take no harm".
- 70 falling house: like the Church clock (140) an instance of English easy-going, "happy-go-lucky" ways contrasted with German ruthless efficiency.
- 72 notice how "get me to England" (a mediaeval, not modern, phrase) adds an extra syllable to the metre and avoids banality, at the same time expressing the sense of *haste*.
- 74, 76 Men who Understand, Splendid Hearts: capitals are ironical.
- 80 urban means having the objectionable features of a city; while urbane means having the *pleasant* manners of citizens! squat: low bodies, low brows, guile: low cunning

89 cockney rhymes : possibly indecent, but after 'twisted hearts' and before "nameless crimes" is bathos, deliberate anticlimax for comic effect.

93, 95, 97 Strong men—the threefold repetition heightens the comicality. *bydam* : again (sham) mediaeval language; we should describe this as *burlesque* poetry.

100 peace and holy quiet : abrupt return to serious appreciation, strongly contrasted with the foregoing twenty lines, which are laughing at the way one village whispers dreadful tales about the next (parochialism).

103 lithe : supple and graceful in their movements.

104 boky : with much undergrowth.

115 shoot themselves : the poet returns to satire and bathos, immediately followed by deeper genuine feeling in

115 Ah God ! nostalgia uppermost again.

120 sobbing : making a sound like weeping.

121 clumps : small close groups of trees.

124 yet unacademic : Grantchester is some miles above Cambridge, which is dominated by its university, and so described as academic. So the river is not yet academic at Grantchester.

126 Anadyomene (pronounced anna-dye-ommany, more or less) a Greek participle meaning "rising from (out of) the foam" (sea), usually referring to Aphrodite or Venus, the most beautiful goddess of love.

127 golden sea; the fenland (Cambridgeshire)
sunsets are very beautiful; the skies are like
pictured seas.

130 hares : like their cousins, the rabbits, feed at
twilight.

133 laughs : see note to previous poem, line 9.
The noise is meant.

137. 138 yet...forget...yet : the extra rhyme in mid-
line, and repeating the same word, stress the
emotion, at once relieved by the affectionate
joke about the clock (see note on line 70).

Criticisms.

Brooke was distinguished by the ardour of his tempera-
ment...No young poet, not even Byron, was ever so uni-
versally acclaimed by his contemporaries; and when he
died in the service of his country, his death caused wider
grief than Philip Sidney's. His poems are not only ardent,
but accomplished.

—*Newbolt.*

The British heart has accepted him for its own; the
fine seriousness of his last poems, inspired by the war,
has that note of absolute spontaneousness which had been
at times lacking in the happy fancies of his verve.

—*Cazamian.*

The poetry of Rupert Brooke is a poetry of youth and
romance...In many poems he followed a contemporary
tendency to a rough and cynical realism in verse. In this
respect several of his earlier poems may be compared to
the work of Mr. James Stephens, although Brooke did not
at this stage possess the originality in humour, philosophy

of life and knowledge of human character belonging to Mr. Stephens. In melody and range of expression he gained immeasurably in later years. 'Tiare Tabiti' and 'The Great Lover' have a music and a cadence which set them far above his early work: and, in another mode, the handling of the octosyllabic couplets of the spirited 'Old Vicarage : Grantchester' is admirable.

—*Williams.*

The poetry of Rupert Brooke may be profitably studied under the following headings :

- (1) Originality of conception : (2) clearness of vision ;
- (3) strength of emotion ; (4) beauty and suggestiveness of phrasing : (5) vividness of colour and imagery ;
- (6) musical quality of the rhythms.

—*Manly and Rickert.*

Humour he had in abundance, but of witty insincerity no trace. Never was a personality more finely balanced.

—*Drinkwater.*

'The Old Vicarage. Grantchester' is an altogether charming example of intellectual playfulness... There is no question that the sonnet series is the crowning glory of Brooke's poetic achievement. He has moved to the depths of his rich nature as he had never been before, and all his gifts of artistic endowment thrilled for use in this supreme offering of himself and his powers to one great object.

—*Cunliffe.*

G. K. Chesterton (1) The Donkey

Summary :

In a time of strange enchantment a queer beast was born, its head a peculiar shape, its cry dismaying, more like a devilish cartoon than a real quadruped. For centuries it has been neglected in appearance and obstinate in behaviour. This despised, abused, ridiculed animal, the poet tells us, can look down on its detractors; for one Sunday long ago Christ rode on a donkey in triumph to Jerusalem.

Notes and Explanations :

Line 1 flying fish and walking trees could only be enchanted under a magic spell.

2 haws are the proper fruit of thorn.

3 the bloody moon shows that the spell was evil in purpose.

4 The poet means that only a devil, mocking creation, could have shaped so ugly a creature as a donkey.

5 The donkey's bray, "hee-haw" is terrifying when first heard. In literature, it was the means of stampeding (sending off with a rush of fear) John Gilpin's horse the second time. (poem by Cowper).

6 errant : wandering; one sticks up and one down or any way.

7 parody : humorous copy.

9 tattered : in rags; his hair or bristles are often uneven.

10 ancient crooked : for centuries not straight-forward.

11 scourge ; that is, whip. deride : laugh at, mock, jeer.

15 shout : "Hosanna ! Blessed is he that cometh, in the Name of the Lord ! Hosanna to the Son of David. Hosanna in the highest !" Words taken from the psalms. recorded in the gospels, Matthew xxi, 9; Mark xi, 9. 10; Luke xix, 38, as sung in homage to Jesus Christ on "Palm Sunday." Hosanna is a laudatory valediction. This whole incident. and the donkey's proud remembrance of his part in it. carrying Jesus, is the *secret* referred to in line 12.

(2) The House of Christmas.

Paraphrase :

The truth represented or symbolised in the picture of the birth of Jesus Christ are eternally powerful to change men's wills and lives for the better; force, even at its finest achievement, the Pax Romana, was by comparison transitory. "We are sojourners and pilgrims, as all our fathers were." "For we have a better country, to wit, an heavenly". "Like the Holy Family, we came from, and go to, our home in God". "Our hearts are restless. until we find rest in Thee." The common-sense world of materialists is savage and meaningless really; yet, on this earth. breathing its air, we can see the wonderful works of God, and fight the battle of good against evil, because God was man at Bethlehem. Rest is not unattainable after all; and peace was heralded by the angels that night. Before Creation God was; and men must come to Him

at the last; His citadel of the heart is greater than empires. The star of Bethlehem, a puzzle to scientists, leads us to the answer and solution of all problems, to the Fatherhood of God.

Notes, etc.

Line I fared : went; the mother is Mary.

5 crazy : ready to fall down.

16 yule : old name for Christmas.

17 foul : insanitary.

18 foam : water at the mouth.

23 no chart : the poet means that Bethlehem is a universal reality : God is always humbling Himself with men.

26 strange : modern physics says nothing is like our sensations of it.

29 fire-drake : the censer of adoration, 'incense-carrier used in worship. Worship is the true satisfaction.

30, 31, 32 impossible, unthinkable, incredible. The movements of the star of Bethlehem (Matthew ii, 2, 9, 10) cannot be reconciled (by scientists of to-day) with those of any known heavenly body. We cannot imagine what angels' wings are like even if we believe in them. Apart from the improbability (to worldly minds) of the story, the condition of *peace* sung by the angels, "to men of good will" (Douai version, more correct) is itself apparently impossible. Mankind as a whole

seems well-nigh 'incapable of mutual good will. hence nationalism and war, and a host of other troubles.

33 open house : "Come unto me *all* that are heavy laden", said Christ.

evening : when heat of illusion cools.

35 Eden, in the Bible, the abode of the (innocent) first men.

39, 40 Compare note on lines 23, 24. the *place* is not physical, but a state of worship and trust like that of the Magi and shepherds. God exalts the humble, and fills the hungry. The student should read the Magnificat (Luke i 46-55) and realise that the 'poet is saturated in the same spirit.

The supernatural.

Chesterton's attitude is never in doubt : he is a convinced orthodox Christian, accepting the Bible stories as factual, historic and profoundly significant for mankind. To him, civilisation, Christ, and progress are inseparable. Mystical experience is more convincing, as well as more attractive, than the quasi-logical denials of modernistic science. He just lived to see the collapse of scientific opposition to what Christians call revealed truth ; only in Russia and a few obsolescent minor coteries elsewhere do persons who claim the scientific habit of mind dogmatize, either in or beyond the scope of their studies ; the vast and more advanced majorities are at worst agnostic, and often definite believers in God. People who talk about the opposition of religion and science now-a-days must know nearly as little about science as they obvi-

ously do about religion. With rare insight, Chesterton foresaw and prophesied this development in his prose writings, while practically taking it for granted in his poetry.

Criticisms.

Chesterton's music is always like himself, and nearly always unlike other peoples'.

—*Newbolt.*

What enabled Chesterton to discover the beauty of common things and to pierce the nummery of the cultivated egoist was first and last his poet's gift, and this kept him fresh and free...Always and everywhere he gains the crest of song because he has seen the little things among which he wanders ; who chants the wassail in a world that seems young because he himself is a boy.

—*Shuster.*

Chesterton's literary temperament is that of a humorist, bent upon refreshing a severely traditional doctrine through the constant unexpectedness of the style. A belief in the fruitful novelty of the most ancient truths : such is the motive behind those verbal variations upon themes which are overgrown to the point of being lost sight of.

—*Cazamian.*

Chesterton is a poet, and a considerable poet, not because of his strict attention to the rules of prosody, but because he cannot help himself, and the rules in question are for the persons who can, the poets by deliberate intention, the writers who polish unceasingly. Chesterton has more impulse than finish, but he has natural gifts of rhythm

and the effective use of words which more or less compensate for his refusal or his incapacity to take pains.

—West.

The men of the nineties (1890-99) were aweary of this great world ; Mr. Chesterton suffers from no megrims of disillusion. His simple philosophy is that God's in His heaven and all's right with the world (*Cf. Browning*).

But the poem that stirs and starts the blood in the veins is the splendidly grotesque soliloquy of "*The Donkey*" Nevertheless little in the early volume can compare with the "*The Ballad of the White Horse*", a long poem written with a genius for catching the spirited adventurousness of the folk-ballad. It is as spontaneous and unforced as one of Scott's lays ; it contains hardly any subtleties or abstract images ; and it has pre-eminently in its narrative the fine objective manner of the old ballad and carol, a virtue almost lost to the mind of an introspective age.

—Williams.

John Davidson : In Romney Marsh.

Summary.

Dymchurch Wall protects Romney Marsh from the incoming sea. The South breeze is pleasant there ; the flat country is relieved by little mounds; on which the Normans (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) built churches. The breeze always blows, twanging the telegraph wires on the main road east to Hythe. There is a mist over the straits of Dover, but the upper air is clear and bright. Ships can be seen, and the sound of the waves is unceasing, re-echoed by the beach. Turning inland, the poet saw the Downs (a range of Kentish hills) in the distance. In fine weather the sunset is red in colour. Night fell and the stars came out ; but the wind and the twanging sound of the telegraph wires continued. In the dark, the foam and spray at the sea's edge still shone, and the roar of breaking waves was like the deep notes of an organ.

Notes :

Line 2 South sing : the wind is meant.

4 knolls : mounds or little hills.

Norman Churches : sturdy stone buildings with round (not pointed) arches and square towers, roofed.

5 taut and lithe : pulled tight and yet easy to bend.

6 core : this word is derived from the Latin for "heart" usually used of the central uneatable part of an apple,

8 unwound : would make better sense ! This verse is proof enough that Davidson is not in

repentance, to be his own god and kingdom of heaven. His "Ballads and Songs" was his most popular book.

—*Williams.*

John Davidson is as varied as he is excellent, and as charming in moments of light-heartedness as he is noble in his tragic moods. His 'In Romney Marsh' is finely balanced in phrase and image and rising to a magnificent climax of metaphorical description in the two last verses. His keen sense of country sights and sounds reaches its highest in 'A Runnable Stag'. His ballads and eclogues, a few of his lyrics and passages in his poetic tragedies are already graven on the scroll of immortal verse.

—*Jackson.*

W. H. Davies : (1) Leisure.

Summary :

Animals have the secret of appreciation : they stand still. But civilised man is apt always to be in a hurry, and to worry about one thing or another. He will not wait, and he misses Beauty. The Poet's life is enriched, because he knows how to be still and contemplate nature.

Notes :

1st couplet. Grammatically, these two lines are a question; but its answer is obvious; "this life is worthless, unless we have leisure." Such a question is called rhetorical, and other authors, like Davies, refuse to end it with a mark of interrogation (?).

2nd couplet. Under the branches of trees there is shade.

3rd couplet. You must be still to watch a squirrel, or he will run away.

4th couplet. If you look down at a stream from high banks, shaded, it is possible to see the stars reflected there. In broad daylight they are of course still in the sky, but the sun is so bright that we cannot see them.

5th couplet. Catching a sight of Beauty, we need to stop, look full at her, and she will dance for us ! Though we must stand still to see it, what we see in Nature is not itself immobile, motionless. The squirrel runs fast; the leaves quiver, the water ripples.

6th couplet. The contemplation (thoughtful watching) of beauty is happiness of a keen kind, which does not exclude gaiety and merriment; as a girl first smiles with her eyes, then with her lips, and finally bursts into laughter; so Beauty, if we are satisfactory suitors, gives us more and more pleasure and cheerfulness.

7th couplet. Merely the first without the rhetorical question.

(2) The Kingfisher.

Summary :

The Kingfisher's colours are so bright and varied, she must be the daughter of the rainbow, which is the child of Sun and Tears! With such ancestry, the kingfisher loves lonely pools and "trees that weep." The poet says she might well vie with proud peacocks, and show herself in splendid parks and royal palaces; but she is not vain or ambitious; like the poet himself she likes quiet greenery, lonely pools, trees sighing in the wind.

Line 3 Tears : rain is heaven's tears, traditionally.

4 runs it in thy blood : as an inherited tendency.

5 haunts : favourite resting-places.

6 trees that weep : weeping willows, or other waterside trees.

11 clap thy wings : like clapping hands to attract attention; not reasonable, but a delightful idea; one of W. H. Davies' brilliant simplicities.

(3) The Moon :

Summary.

The Poet says the sense of the wonderful beauty of the Moon never leaves him. He wants to "cry for the moon" for a plaything as children do. True, no poet could vie with the nightingales in beauty of song to praise the Moon; but they stop to rest. The Poet says his silent adoration will never be done.

Notes.

Line 1 haunts : attends as a ghost does, never leaving the victim : no connection with the plural noun in line 5 of the poem above.

2 close : the full moon often appears so.

4 own : possess.

8 across their throats : the nightingale raises her beak to sing, and her throat is exposed.

Criticisms.

Less trained but a richer genius than Bridges : a poet of thankful praise : imitates Elizabethan and Caroline poets : happy in singing of a dark mood or mental process or beautiful gaieties of nature : a genuine singer.

—*Megroz.*

His work is the nearest approach to absolute simplicity : reminds one of Herrick : pure poetry undimmed by any other consideration: absence of any affiliation, ancient or modern. He wrote some of the grimmest pages out of contemporary life. Deep emotion is not a feature of Davies' poetry.

—*Sturgeon.*

The songs of W. H. Davies are an extreme and therefore a striking example of spontaneity of mood, fresh every moment as a well-spring, brought to the drinker in pitchers of old and elegant shapes. —*Newbolt.*

Genuinely in revolt against the ugliness and impersonality of urban life, Davies finds in the cultivation of tender feelings about the beauty of nature and of animal life the satisfaction that a more complex and exacting world cannot offer. And his artistry is as artless as his ideas and emotions. At its best, it has a spontaneity and lucidity, a simplicity and charming directness that we associate, however erroneously, with childhood. But, at its worst (and Davies seems almost devoid of the power of self-criticism), his verse runs dangerously near to doggerel, and the honesty and sweetness of his spirit hardly furnish less idyllic natures more than a sense of vicarious escape. For the ineptitudes, the false simplicity, the cockney unreality of Georgian poetry, Davies, in particular, must be blamed. —*Millett.*

Contemplation and observation are his great delights, and the subjects of his poems arbitrarily occur to him while thus amusing himself. The habit evident among many of his contemporaries of consciously selecting their subjects is plainly absent in him. His philosophy of life and of living is almost unimaginably simple. What is known as "religious speculation" is apparently very rare to Davies. The child is always a fresh marvel to him. He is powerfully attracted by the sea, by good company and by ale. —*Monro.*

Mr. Davies does more than express his own love of the beautiful things out of doors. He is conscious of a

reciprocity in friendliness and tells his readers about it. He is "Nature's Friend."

He has something of a child's capacity for anticipation. The effervescent gayety of many of his short lyrics is like the perennially renewed youth of the out of doors.

The English and the Irish seem to have domesticated nature, if we can judge by much of their poetry about it. Mr. Davies is only one of many English poets who sing of a nature in which cows and horses and mice have a place, a nature of rose bushes and trimmed hedges. It is the cultivated nature of lanes and gardens that Edward Thomas knows and of which he tells us in a number of delightful whimsical poems.

—Wilkinson,

Mr. Davies has shown us man being what Mr. Chesterton has told us he ought to be—surprised. And he has, it must be admitted, given us more to be surprised at; he has communicated his wonder rather than indoctrinated us with the gospel. The very nature of his verse does it; as he with the sheep, so we with his poems can only stand and stare. The majority of his *Collected Poems* are 'nature poems' certainly, but what a number of other subjects there are! Infancy, children, the poet's friends and acquaintances, death, sickness, poetry, money, eating and drinking, sleep, age, the outcast poor, sailors, music, a blind child, the lodging-house fire, religion; and besides all these two particular groups of poems—the love poems and those on the moods of the mind. It seems, with such a list before us, difficult to think of a subject Mr. Davies has not found for his verse. It is clear anyhow that his staring has been universal: he no more, again, than Wordsworth has neglected the human heart by which we live.

—Williams

Walter De La Mare : (1) The Listeners.

Introduction :—

WDLM is pre-eminently the poet of *magic*, as Gerald Bullett says. He writes of "the intangible secrecies that lie just beyond the edge of sense."

His *metres* appear at first sight to be conventional, but really they are a far greater departure from convention, "more rich in technical innovation" than the work of those who pose as innovators. This particular poem depends for its effect entirely on subtle suggestion. A feeling of unearthliness is brought about; but *the terror itself is beautiful*. All the suggestions are tenuous and delicate, like threads of the finest silk; often we cannot realise that they are there at all without long thought. The secret of WDLM'S genius is, as Mr. J. B. Priestley says (*Figures in Modern Literature*) that he "remembers Eden"; the marvellous hopes and fears of childhood remain clear to him, and are conveyed with perfect economy of language.

Summary:—

A horseman dismounts, and knocks on a castle door in a forest by moonlight. No answer: nothing is heard but the horse as he crops (eats) the grass. Silence. Suddenly a bird's wings from the top of the tower make one think no human being can be there. But the traveller tries again, and the echoes of his knocking die away slowly. He did not move; he did not quite know what to do. There were many in that house listening, but they did not belong to the world of living men; they were phantoms (ghosts). The air shook with the knocking ("reverberated") but

nothing else moved. He could see the leaves above his head, and stars shining through among them; the grassy ground, where the horse still fed, looked black. At last he made up his mind; louder than ever he beat on the door the third time, lifted his head, and said: "Tell them I came and no one answered. I had promised to come, and I kept my promise." He mounted, and rode away. Silence came back like the tide of the sea returning, as the noise of the horse's hoofs died away.

Notes:

Line 3 champ: munch or bite noisily

4 ferny: ferns are a beautiful peculiar green plant. Notice the alliteration (three f's)

5 tarret: little round topmost tower.

7 smote: struck, hit.

10 leaf-fringed sill: the ledge below the window had leaves, probably of ivy, along it.

12 perplexed: bewildered, puzzled

17 thronging: crowded in

23 cropping: eating. turf: short grass

33 stirrup: rider's metal foot-rest, as he sits on the leather saddle.

34 iron on stone: before the castle door, there would be a stone pavement. The horse's hoofs would be shod with iron.

35 surged: metaphor of sea; compare end of summary above.

Metre:

Three accents in each line, with very varied number of syllables. The idea is that each line should take the same time; read the long ones faster and the short ones slower. The sounds of the incidents described will become clear.

Criticism.

Perhaps the almost universal belief, that some "spirits" or appearances of the dead, return constantly or occasionally to places where their deepest feelings were aroused, the belief in ghosts, has never been better put than in this poem. It is all what is called "pure" poetry, that is, not personal like W. H. Davies' "When I"...no associations are called up: even the word "God" is avoided. It is questionable whether the fantastic other-world beyond our consciousness is in any way connected with what is usually called the supernatural; but since the student reader is obliged to assume a connection it is assumed here. "Man's courage facing the cryptic riddle of life."

(2) All that's past. Critical Appreciation.

"His art depends on harmony, melody, and rhyme. His style is fluid (easily running) and his diction (choice of words) free from unnatural elevation or rhetorical expansion." (Harold Monro).

"The sense of the antiquity of man, and the still greater antiquity of the earth from which he draws his sustenance, is exquisitely expressed in this poem "All that's past." (J. H. Fowler).

"We are the heirs of all the ages, not merely because the poetry of the past is ours to read, but because the thoughts of past generations are in our blood."

Metre:

Three accents in the odd, two in the even, lines. Eight-line stanzas. "Oh, no, man knows" (line 7) and the next "Roves back the rose." are spondaic lines, one or both the feet having two long syllables.

Summary:—

Man can have no idea of the age of trees and shrubs, streams and rivers, or even his own race.

Notes:—

Line 3 briar: flowering shrub (white heath)

8 roves: literally, wanders; note alliteration.

10 rills: streamlets

12 azure: deep blue

13 sing such a history: their very sound seems to tell the story.

14 of (ages, creatures, and the states of men) come and gone (again)

16 Solomon: king of Israel & Judah, son of David, built the first monotheistic temple, famous for wise judgment,

19 Eden: Paradise of lost innocence; 'dim' because forgotten.

20 nightingales: they were very sweet songs once.

24 amaranth: a purple plant that never fades.

Criticisms.

He is a poet of dream almost entirely and reminds one of Coleridge's dream poetry. Eeriness in *de la Mare* rarely approaches the macabre.

Greater verbal cunning than Hardy's: a poet of dream: his "restless thought" convincing him of its futility.

Andrew Lang found in his "Songs of Childhood" "what Charles Lamb calls 'a fairy way of writing'". It is less

what he says than what his verse suggests that delights us. How does the verse suggest more than it says? By the mere circumstance that it really is poetry. Mr. Ramal (his pen-name) has something of the secret of Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.

—Megroz.

Sense of the supernatural: suggestion of a mystical basis to the elusive witchery of many of his poems. It is because he is a child of his age that he has brought child-psychology into his verse with such wonderful accuracy. There is one sense in which the poet is never grown up.

—Sturgeon.

In method, diction, metre, he owes everything and nothing to the poets before him.....he uses common words to carry a sound and a meaning never heard before, and changes an old metre to a set of rhythms so new that no one recognizes it.

—Newbolt.

I am apt to pride myself on a catholic taste in letters, but I have read the whole of your two volumes of collected verse without being moved to anything more enthusiastic than a feeling of tepid appreciation here and there, and when I see the critics writing a lot of stuff about elves and fairies, fauns and dryads and whimsical dreamings I begin, with the best will in the world, to mistrust the author.

—Lacon.

✓ It is almost impossible not to compare Mr. de la Mare with Mr. Yeats. Of both poetries it is a temptation to use the word 'magical', for these two poets, more than any others living, are adept in the incantation through words of indefinable emotions and unassociated passions.

Both of them begin with faery; both of them have moved into a world of profound humanity. But there the resemblance ceases. For it might be held that, though the reader derives an equally intense satisfaction from the later work of both poets, he receives from Mr. Yeats the communication of a rich and unappeased longing, while from Mr. de la Mare he receives a rich and appeased content.

—*Williams.*

✓ In Walter de la Mare's charmingly melodic poem, "The Listeners", it seems possible that the rhythm of the whole may have been determined by the cadence of the first line. If this poem had been as well begun by a man without genius, it would certainly have been spoiled in the third lineUnlike Mr. Gibson, Walter de la Mare has, in his own shadowy way, a real genius for the presentation of individual personality. His poems are all combinations of twilight shades, charming compositions in violet, ivory and olive. But his pictures, made with colours that would seem to be evanescent succeed in fixing themselves indelibly in our minds.

—*Wilkinson.*

John Drinkwater: The Midlands.

Hardly a single critic will admit that J. D. is a poet at all. If they do condescend to discuss any example of his art (he has published *more* than Masfield, whose collected works on India paper weigh some ten pounds avoirdupois) it is usually a short one. They assert that he is trite, his rhymes familiar, his styles imitative, his matter negligible. No one, certainly, could call him thrilling; he is neither a lusty champion like Chesterton, or a jig-and-polka tin soldier like Kipling's more frequent aspect: he has little command of magic and the eerie to compare to De La Mare, and his pictures of nature are not etched miniatures, jewelled and compact, like Davies'; but if you want workmanlike verse that violates no accepted canon, and with deliberation says what it sets out to say; if you are still a little frightened of mysticism and symbolism, elfin antics and winged irony; if, in fact, you are only half converted to reading poetry at all, you might do worse than ponder Drinkwater. Students at least, if they are not in too much of a hurry, may afterwards be glad they stopped to read him. He is the shallow end of the bath for the novice to splash in. Even Robert Lynd, writing a commercial introduction to an anthology *selected by a publisher*, (that is, selected solely to sell, and it has sold extremely well) can only find one thing to praise him for, which he has to share with Mr. Belloc; his praise of his chosen county and rural district in England. He ascribes it to a "passion for the actual" personal experience, and truly says such a thing was not expressed in Elizabethan or eighteenth-century poetry. And the reason it was not expressed was, that the poets had some-

thing better to do, and something of more interest to say, than to apply their muse to the purposes of a Chamber of Commerce guide-book. With which, consider "The Midlands" on its merits.

Summary :

The poet is sleeping in a house on the Cotswold hills (Gloucestershire) and the night is dark and cool. The only sound is of foxes. The poet thinks of how these valleys look in the mornings, when the red-cheeked farmers go to work or market, singing or whistling. He pictures to himself the season of harvest; and remembers with admiration the design and architecture of farms and landowners' houses and poor folks' cottages, all hundreds of years old; he thinks of the flocks of sheep and their shepherds. He describes these scenes and the night as of a "land of worship" using the word in the older sense of "dignity", and is content to know that he himself is a native of that part of the country.

Paraphrase, stanza 1.

It is a dark summer night in Gloucestershire, and the hill, one of the Cotswold range, opposite my window, looks black. The sky is dark violet, like the flowers of that name found in the woods in March. Their colour suggests passion and blood. Though it is summer, my stone house is cool, and as I watch the stars gradually come out, I think over the manners and customs of the place, which I at any rate like best of all places in England. It is quite quiet, except for foxes barking.

Notes to stanza 1.

1. Aslant : in a slanting direction across, the outline of the slope being higher on one side than the other.

bedded : planted close together.

dusky : dark, violets are not bright flowers.

abed : in bed. host : army or large number.

slow : so they are. habit : custom, routine.

dominion : power over (rather meaningless)

spinneys : small wood, shrubbery. thicket.

Paraphrase, stanza 2.

Thinking over the manners and customs of Cotswold, I remember misty mornings when the damp makes the hills very clear while the sun is coming up. The yeomen, or freehold farmers, sing and whistle: there are many white roads, but not broad: and the traffic is either pairs of horses going to plough the fields or red-cheeked, cloth-gaitered farmers taking goods or beasts to the market town. They know all about seasons and the care of corn or cows. As the sun still rises in the sky, the mist disappears.

Notes to stanza 2.

limpid : clear as crystal. wreathed : clouds of mist round the hills like garlands. melodist : one who makes a musical tune. twinkling : the white dust moves as one watches fieldward: going towards the fields. teams : i. e.. of horses. gear : a very general word, implying carts, harness, anything taken to market. Rosy ; referring to the colour of their complexions (cheeks). *Cloth gaiters* are worn to protect the legs; they are cheaper than leather. Many-minded : if J. D. means the year has thoughts, this is the "pathetic fallacy" by which other things are supposed to think or feel as men do; but it is more likely that it is a "transferred epithet" implying that farmers must have many thoughts and kinds of knowledge to do the right thing in every different season.

The word belongs to the men, but is transferred to the changes; a classical poetic licence. Kine : cows. fare ill or well : get on well or badly. Persuade the mist : it does it so gently, (by evaporation) that the poet calls the process persuasion. stead : (farm)-house, or simply place.

Paraphrase, stanza 3

The poet says he sees in his mind the time when clover is ripe. It smells sweet in summer. Hay is cut about that time, too, and corn harvested a little later. The workman ("farm hand") with a fork is very supple and his movements are as graceful as they are powerful. With a deft throw, the full load of the fork is "pitched" on to a wagon. Hay is made into hayricks (also called haystacks) grouped round a rickyard. There is plenty to talk about as the wagons come in loaded from the hillside. The poet remembers that this is an eternal thing; long after writer and reader are dead there will still be harvests.

Notes to stanza 3

Summer-breathing clover flower : common field plant rich in honey, perfumed in hot weather. Grown both for bees and for fodder, that is, to feed cattle in winter. lissom : supple. husbandman : ought to mean a farmer, but J. D. means only a farm worker. Deep in his heart : not in his conscious mind ; but his strength is beautiful to watch. Lithely : with a skilful bend. bids on : metaphor, calls on ; the poet means that every forkful pitched brings the end nearer. Sealed : must mean over, finished (we are sent away like a letter):

Paraphrase, stanza 4

Again, he sees the buildings, barns and gentlemen's houses finely shaped ; their builders somehow had only fine ideas ; they had no elaborate tools, but their work was divinely beautiful. The poor people's cottages too, though small, are beautiful now as they were when they were built in the Plantagenet dynasty (from twelfth to fourteenth century). The shepherds have these ; after a day out on the hills with their flocks, they are happy to come home to a supper of home-made bread and home brewed cider. In the dusk they drive the sheep, so many white patches shining in the gloom, into the sheep-fold for the night. Many shepherds are old men, brown and not rosy now.

Notes to stanza 4.

' comely ; beautiful in shape. **shippon** ; set-square, i.e., a triangular piece of wood used in mechanical drawing. **wrought** : worked. Plantagenet kings came after Norman conquerors ; **cider** : an apple drink. healthy and potent. **set** : arranged ready by their wives. **glimmering** : see paraphrase above.

Paraphrase, stanza 5

Now the valleys are misty once more, that lost the mist in the morning (stanza 2) ; light fades, sounds cease ; the hill opposite which the poet calls his own, is black. and the stars shine. One hears the sound of an owl flying past for a moment, then it is quiet again. The poet has sung the dignity of his favourite place ; he turns over and goes to sleep, well pleased that his ancestors were from this Midland part of the country.

upon the sun : at its rise. opal : milky white or bluish stone. wolds : open uncultivated tracts, pastures. owly : belonging to an owl, a night-bird sacred to the goddess of learning. worship : dignity, see paraphrase and summary above. sires : fathers, father, grandfather and so on. draw the blood : inherit their nationality. shires : alternative name for counties (lands of a count or earl) ancient divisions of England.

Criticisms.

His Muse does not love twilight and melancholy and mysticism as does the Celtic Muse.

—Sturgeon.

Unlike the true artist he is always self-conscious. He is thought-suggestive, thought-stimulating. but sets no kindling spark either to the imagination or to passion. When he forgets himself and his art he writes his greatest poetry. He sometimes adopts the irregular form of verse for the sake of ease and spontaneity of expression. His patriotic poems are faultless in form and admirable in spirit. Just as Mr. Drinkwater sees history in everyday events, so in everyday events, in trivial happenings, he sees symbolized what is heroic, marvellous, even what is holy and sacramental. His frequent note of thanksgiving reveals an essentially religious mind.

—Kernahan.

Mr. Drinkwater is less at his ease in lyric than in elegiac, meditative and hortative verse. His lyrics have a grave intention which differentiates them from a flow of unpremeditated song. And he uses English with restraint and respect. The bent of his temperament is to the

ethical and intellectual, and neither imagination nor emotion carries him away. In his later volumes Mr. Drinkwater has reached a consistently high level of elegiac and rhetorical verse, but his attainment has been a little monotonously even.

-Williams.

T. S. Eliot: La Figlia Che Piange (Italian: the Sorrowing Girl).

Summary:

The poet tells the girl to pose at the top of a stone stairway with a marble urn to lean upon, and sunlight playing on her hair. Surprised and hurt, she is first to hold her flowers close, then throw them away, and turn her back. Her anger will not last. The sun must shine on her hair.

If this had happened as above described, the lover would have left her "as the soul leaves the body"; finally and completely. There need be no heavy awkwardness; there could be understanding and satisfaction, perhaps even a casual smile and handshake.

The plan went otherwise; she did not gesture and she did not pose; her turning away was real enough, but her hair, without sunlight, fell over her arms, which were full of flowers. The faithless lover could not forget (or was it the poet?) but for many days and many hours saw her like that in his mind. Even now he is troubled at midnight and disturbed in the noonday to think of her, astonished that her grief was genuine after all.

Notes and explanations:

Stanza one. The poet speaks as if directing a play. For the parting he has in mind to describe, sunlight is the first essential, a cheerful light that prevents too much regret. It may not be what a person of genuine feeling would do, but it is highly dramatic first to hug the flowers, then throw them down (symbolising discarded passion). Her resentment is fugitive; that is, not a lasting thing; it runs away almost at once.

Stanza two. Such was the poet's original idea. In such a case, the parting would have been abrupt and final. The soul cannot return to the body, and it is the body; not the soul, that is hurt by the departure. So the lover, in the poet's first thought, would have not been hurt at all after discarding the girl. He, the poet, (by now identifying himself with the lover) would have found a way, light and deft, that is, avoiding heaviness and awkwardness, an unequalled (incomparable) skill in separation, understandable and not involving any after-effects. Just a smile perhaps. and a handshake:—"Well, goodbye."

Stanza three. Autumn followed summer, and the poet found (whether in imagination only, or in experience and actual fact, we cannot be certain) that the girl was not so easily forgotten. She did not indulge in the "gesture and pose" meaning self-conscious acting of a part, that he had first thought of (see stanza one). The sunlight is not mentioned; it could not have been conspicuous or noticeable. But what he did notice and remember was, that her hair had fallen over her arms and the flowers, a mass of which she was carrying. If she had acted dramatically all he would have lost would have been a gesture and a pose, as he says. But she acted naturally and sincerely, and he does not know how much beautiful and precious love he may have lost. He is amazed and cannot stop thinking it over (cogitations).

The Latin quotation at the top means "O how shall I describe thee, maiden.....O thou truly a goddess !

Appreciation :

There is no word wasted or misapplied; there is no jingle or sound and rhythm without appropriate sense. The long

words (fugitive resentment, incomparably, imagination, cogitations) are rather noticeable, and might easily be prosy and tedious. But they are *just*; no other words would express exactly the same meaning. We do not find them unpoetic if we can understand them. Most of this writer's work is far more difficult than the present example, and demands a very high standard of general culture in the reader. Given such attainments, the lyric is delightful and satisfying; it does not grow stale from reading over again, but gives deeper and more subtle pleasure. In some sense, we must admit T. S. Eliot to be a great poet.

Criticisms.

✓ He is the most interesting of modern poets of decadence. *The Waste Land* is probably the greatest separate poem of modern decadence. *The Waste Land* is a modern "Hamlet". His is a superficially cynical mood. The frequent reminiscence of a pre-existent and parallel world of beauty belonging to previous creations of the poets is quite characteristic of the true decadent poetry.
—Megroz.

He is learned in poetry of all ages, and his diction is so sensitively perfected that the classical and the vernacular are but two tones in the same characteristic voice...his images are often striking, and his phrases almost always so... Eliot's poetry moves men each in their own degree...to read *The Love-Song of Alfred J. Prufrock* or *The Portrait of a Lady* is pure delight surpassing the combined pleasures—if they could be combined of Henry James's subtle analysis and George Meredith's ironical humour.
—Newbolt.

Eliot is neither a critical poet nor a poetical critic ; he is a poet analysing the atmosphere to purify it. I know of few judges better equipped than he. His incisive and courageous intellect, always critical of itself, and anxious to arrive at the bottom of realities ; his vast and comprehensive culture (besides Greek, Latin and its derivatives he is acquainted with Sanskrit and Pali) ; his strong reaction against blind traditionalism ;—these are the things that single him out as an opponent of the vulgar crowd and as a redresser of spiritual wrongs. —*Fernandez.*

To comprehend the whole of *The Waste Land* (Eliot's greatest poem) considerable erudition is required, as well as the patience to create from T. S. Eliot's discontinuous technique of presentation whatever experience of the universe it is intended to communicate. Critics whose judgment it would be merely silly to flout are of the opinion that *The Waste Land* is the great poem of our time. Its last lines are ;

...Hieronymo's mād again.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Dāmyata.

Shantih shantih shantih.

—*Ward.*

In his "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock", "The Portrait of a Lady", and "La Figlia Che Piange" picture and music are surprisingly blended. "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock" is a minor masterpiece ; nothing in recent poetry (if we forget Laforgue and the other French poets to whom Eliot is manifestly indebted), nothing in English at least, has communicated so great a sense of ambiguous hurt and general frustration. In these poems Eliot becomes the laureate of nostalgia, of a dwind-

ling and futile *Wehmut* (melancholy). To dislike Eliot's work because it is obscure is to admit an honest prejudice; to say that Eliot is a charlatan is to repeat the charge that Wagner (great German musician) wrote "Tristram and Isolde" merely to irritate the critics.

—*Untermeyer.*

Nevertheless the influence, first of *Prufrock*, then of *The Waste Land*, has been so far-reaching and so various that you find some at least of the characteristics which are so distinctive of Eliot's manner cropping up in the work of every poet who is writing to-day.

"The fact remains" says Cecil Day Lewis, "that, for good or ill, *The Waste Land* has had a greater influence on present-day verse than the rest of Eliot's work and probably a greater one than any other poetry of the century."

—*Gilkes.*

The urban imagery that affiliates Mr. Eliot to Baudelaire and Laforgue has its significance; a significance that we touched on in glancing at the extreme contrast between Mr. Eliot and Hardy. The poet is as close to the contemporary world as any novelist could be, and his formal verse medium makes possible a concentration and directness, audacities of transition and psychological notation, such as are forbidden to the novelist. Only a very strong originality could so have triumphed over traditional habits, and only very strong preconceptions could hinder the poem's being recognized as the work of a major poet.

—*Leavis.*

"Here is the modern consciousness at its most conscious, expressing itself with no compromise, without senti-

ment or softness, in a mode that combines wit and imagination, flashes of the grand style and studied banality. But *The Waste Land*, his most ambitious work, with all its powerful projection of the desolate and barren, remains a notable failure in artistic communication; only abject disciples will lavish on it the amount of study which no contemporary poem has the right to demand. It is in his lyrics, both early and late, that what Eliot has to say reaches his reader without wilful and unnecessary impediments."

—*Millett.*

It is cleverness that one finds in Mr. Eliot's work. It is for such things, as much as for anything else, that his admirers praise him. His sketches of personality are dry and hard. His comment on the complex lives of worldlings is all entertaining. But a poet must be more than clever and entertaining to merit the attention of many readers. A brittle aestheticism is not enough.

—*Wilkinson.*

His method varies between direct creation and evolution; fundamentalism and modern science agree in his verse. He is a union of opposites and yet a true union. It has been said that Mr. Housman wonderfully unites in one poem a common flatness and an uncommon beauty. But Mr. Eliot rather unites an uncommon flatness and a common beauty.

—*Williams.*

James Elroy Flecker : (1) *To a Poet a Thousand Years Hence.*

Summary :

A thousand years before you read this I shall be gone for ever, but my words remain. I am not interested in mechanical and scientific developments, but in the persistence (*lastingness*) of pleasure, enjoyment, beauty, passion, morals and faith. The mind of man may be only a passing zephyr, an eddy in the breeze; the seer of Maeon (Homer, Greek epic poet and father of the art) said the same thing. But I ask you to read my work in the language we both love "at night, alone", undistracted by business or company. My youth and my desire to create beauty are the eternal part of me, and you will find them in my strange old words.

Notes and explanations :

archaic : of an old and primitive kind.

cruel sky : aeronautics for us are still dangerous.

consummate : perfect.

masonry : stonework.

Bridging the seas and new architecture in new materials are perhaps the most exciting prospect; easier flying is almost a certainty. In H. G. Wells's film "Things to Come" the architecture is cleverly suggested.

wine : probably the art of distillation and the cultivated palate appeal more than the more effect of alcohol.

music and statues : rhythmic and plastic art.

bright-eyed love : after all, the quest of beauty is incomplete without this.

foolish thoughts: no proposition in ethics can ever be proved. Good and evil remain assumptions. Nevertheless, the love of good, and of God, as the next line suggests, are powerful motives of noble conduct.

Paraphrase, stanza four.

"How shall we conquer, when our fancies are only like a wind that drops when the sun goes down? Even this idea (of the passing wind) is not new."

Stanza five.

"But if you are studying the English tongue and its possibilities of beauty, you are a friend of mine. That is what I cared for in my youth."

Metre:

Each line contains four iambic feet with slight variations, e.g., 'student' in st. 5, which is a trochee. 'prayers' in st. 3 is a monosyllable, Maeonides in st. 4 has four syllables.

Appreciation.

Flecker is usually described as half romantic and half classic; it would be truer to say he is all poetic. It is not technically "pure poetry" that he writes, as he frequently uses words for their vague but interesting associations in our minds; even Maeonides here, though the reader may not realise who is meant, gives a little thrill of remembrance of ancient Greek achievement in the expression of beauty and philosophic truth. The power of this lyric is in its simplicity (the "Like a wind" simile in stanza four

is the only sentence that is not in the straightforward prose order) and sincerity; we have no doubt that he really means it; he does love these things, what is best in art, society, religion, and learning, and appeals to our own and posterity's love for them too, which he feels certain we and they will have.

James Elroy Flecker : (2) The Dying Patriot.

Summary :

The dawn of Christian faith in England (697 A.D.) was the coming of Augustine to Kent in the east; the noon of (Latin) culture was the University of Oxford, midway between east and west, in the late middle ages. But love of learning was without humanity, and religion became not only cold, but persecuting. The last stronghold of the ancient faith was Wales, and Lyonesse has been swallowed up by the sea. It is in the west. Perhaps faith has risen and shone and set; yet there are still brave sons of Britain ready to dare and adventure far afield; while I who might lead them must die and join the majority of heroes.

Notes and explanations :

meadow-footing rills : little Kentish streams at the lower end of the gently-sloping green grass fields; they make no noise.

singing...I saw them march; this is the story given by Venerable Bede, a (Saxon) church historian of ninth century.

blue seas : actually the city of Rome is nowhere near the sea.

feet of snow: cultured bath-taking Romans were much whiter than the Anglo-Saxons when adult; though this very mission was brought about by Gregory, now Pope, having seen fair-haired, blue-eyed boys from Britain on sale as slaves. "Not Angles but angels" he called them.

statue cold: the chapels and colleges have many wonderful statues; but there was not much warmth of devotion, in the late middle ages when they were carved.

blood upon her gown: learning was employed largely in controversy, and Protestants and Catholics, each when in power, had their opponents burnt or beheaded with enthusiasm, for example, Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Pole (R. C.), Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley (Prot.)

fair and floral air: Oxford college gardens are famous ("floral air" means appearance of flowers).

love that lingers: love of ancient things only.

great men go: 80 per cent of Prime Ministers have been Oxford men (that is, educated there).

O evening dreams! Notice how Flecker alters the metre here; to be like the other three stanzas, it would have to be something like "Eve of my dreams, O eve!" which is not nearly so good. Flecker is never enslaved to metre.

springs of ocean: tides.

sea-lilies overhead: both Bristol Channel and the flooded Menai Straits have inundated stretches of what was once dry land.

children of the morning: those who still have faith will fight down evil; the young nations of the Commonwealth will not be left out, they demand a share (clamorous).

Hebrides: north British isles only just outside the Arctic circle or north frigid zone.

fleet of stars is anchored: Hades, the abode of the dead, was always thought of as a cold place. Christian hell fire is a later idea.

Star-captains: perhaps a suggestion of Valhalla, the hall of heroes, they stay eternally young. Old stars do die away. Some are quite dark.

dealing with the agonies of the world, Flecker except in a single romantic play never deals with genuinely emotional subjects.

—Newbolt.

Possibly due to low vitality, Flecker found little to interest him but a reaction against realism in verse, a delight in verbal craftsmanship, and a passion for technical perfection—especially the deliberate technique of the French Parnassians whom he worshipped. Flecker was opposed to any art that was emotional or that “taught” anything. “The poet’s business,” he declared, “is not to save the soul of man, but to make it worth saving.” Flecker’s desire to be objective rather than passionate was scarcely consistent with his actual creation, even though he maintained that “the Parnassians raised the technique of their art to a height which enabled them to express the subtlest ideas in powerful and simple verse.” Technique and manner were his abstract gods.

—Untermeyer.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: Flannan Isle (one of the
outer Hebrides).

Summary:

A passing ship at dawn had brought the news that there was no flicker of light where three men were supposed to tend it on Flannan Isle, so three men set sail to find out what was the matter. It was a bright day, but when they neared the lighthouse and saw it apparently deserted, they fell silent. They made their way into the creek, sheltered by a cliff, but only saw three queer black birds, sitting on a partly-submerged rock: as the men approached, they dived without sound or splash. They felt repelled but landed and made the long climb to the lower door of the lighthouse: it was not shut. The smell was the ordinary one they were used to, limewash and tar: but now they thought it strange, and hesitated to go inside. They plucked up courage, however, and all entered together. The table was laid for dinner with meat and cheese and bread: but none had been eaten. A fallen chair suggested some sudden alarm. The tame bird cheeped feebly, because it had not been fed. Still no one wanted to speak. They searched all over the empty lighthouse and then all over the hole and corner of the island from one side to the other, but they could find nothing whatever. They crept into the room again like children who have been frightened. They thought, remembering that all lighthouse-keepers at this particular rock had misfortune, sudden death or madness, even suicide. They could not speak.

Notes and Explanations:

Line 3, under the lee, passing on the safe side, away from the wind. Line 4, limmer, smallest sign of light. 7.

ail, be wrong with. Line 10 glancing; flashing, gleaming. spray, water flying in particles, as from waves. 11 swell, heaving of the sea. 12 gallant: fine sight. gull, long-winged, web-footed marine bird. 23 crag, a steep rugged rock. 26 guillemot or shag are two kinds of sea-birds, big. half-tide reef: a ridge of rock that is under water at high tide, but exposed as the water drops. 30 spurt: thin line. 31 mazed: rendered dull and senseless. 41 sun-blister'd; the effect of strong sun on paint is to make it come up in spots which burst, called blisters. 42 gaped; was open, like a sleepy man's mouth. 43 spell; short time. 49 tongue-tied, momentarily dumb. 59 foreboding; expecting some evil. 51 ere; conjunction, before. 67 cheeping; thin cry. 72 ransack'd; looked everywhere in. 75 cranny, cleft and nook; three words meaning the same thing for emphasis, small corner. 81, stole, crept quietly, as if trying to avoid notice. 95 likely; promising, bright. 104 curs; mongrel dogs. Like curs &c., i.e., being greatly frightened. 105 flinching, shrinking back. 107 overtoppled, toppled or fallen over.

Appreciation: The ideals of this author are plainly the same as those of William Wordsworth; "to choose incidents and situations from common life;...to describe them in language...really used by men,...above all, to make them interesting by tracing...the primary laws of our nature." The words are all simple; there is nothing difficult about the metre; but suspense is held; we are waiting for we know not what. The whole is a fine example of restraint in pathos.

Criticisms.

He is a modern and greater Crabbe.—*Megroz.*

The verse of "Daily Bread" is unique in English poetry.—*Sturgeon*.

Gibson has preserved for the nation a remnant of the old life of the English.—*Newbolt*.

In "*The Stonefolds*" he turned aside from conventional romance to present the life of the rather grim shepherd folk of his own rugged Northumbrian hills. The poet's aim was to catch the gleam of romance in everyday life without ever losing hold of reality. He naturally chose free verse for his subject in his *Daily Bread*. It seemed to suit the subject he had chosen and to be capable of reproducing the effect of everyday conversation.

—*Cunliffe*.

Some of his poems, like "Flannan Isle" have a macabre and eerie twist, some, like "The Stone", are grim; but in concentration of power and psychical weirdness the best of the tales, "The Old Man", is also one of the shortest. His realistic poem may be said to be anticipatory of the attempts of Mr. Masfield to write passionately and violently of rough and common men.

His short dramatic poems contain more humanity and more true drama than much in poetic drama which has appeared on the stage.

—*Williams*.

As a writer of stories in verse he is not as accomplished as his contemporary John Masfield. Another of his contemporaries is charged with having described him as "Masfield without the Damns."

It is probable that his talent is rather dramatic than lyrical or narrative, but it is doubtful whether his mind has the freedom and impartiality necessary for dramatic characterisation.

—*Monro*.

Edmund Gosse: The Charcoal-burner.

Summary:

The charcoal-burner does not often leave the clearing in the wood where his work is done; most of the time he is by himself. Grey-bearded, grey-eyed, he walks so quietly that animals are frightened. From his fire the smoke winds upwards, pale blue; which the poet finds pleasant to see. He says that the charcoal-burner, though living a life of monotony, is able to enjoy and understand the nature of woodlands, birds and animals. He is kind to them, and therefore in the sight of God, he is nearer to truth and reality, a more effective person, than pleasure-seekers or even scientists and philosophers. But to mankind at large he will live and die unknown.

Notes and Explanations:

Stanza 1. Hollow wood; the trees are thickest at the edge. Dell; same as dale, like vale; only smaller. Revolves: "The daily round the common task" (Kemble, *Christian Year*.)

Stanza 2. Still; calm. grizzled; partly grey.

Stanza 3. Spire; that is, spiral, winding or coiling upward. Scented labour; in plain English, smelly work. Builds: the fire makes the smoke rise. Track the woodland: find my way in it.

Stanza 4. Serious trees...

Paraphrase:

The fire is to the poet a sign of someone's enjoyment, unlike the trees, which are rather solemn in appearance.

The silent woodland is enlivened, as though a pleasant tune were being played.

Stanza 5. Humdrum; prosaic mystery: hidden secret.

Paraphrase:

Do not suppose that because he always does the same things over and over again, the magic of nature does not interest or affect him; in the quiet undisturbed forest he has learnt (stanza 6) without being able to put it into words, a harmless, even sacred, feeling for wild life. This feeling is like the woodpigeon's song, not exciting but not unhappy either (stanza 7) but contented and peaceful as trees and flowers seem to be.

Stanza 6. Blithe; gay, merry. stanza. 7 unecstatic, not with disturbance to the poise. ravishment: delight. rustic bosom; countryman's heart. 8 paternal passion: fatherly feeling. 9 horny: hard. warm brood: that is, ruddy young, (it is really tawny brown). bushy; she has a bushy or spreading tail, she does *not* live in bushes, but in trees. peril, danger, she feels quite safe with him. 10 dormouse, an animal that sleeps all winter (hibernates) and is famous in literature through Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" the incident of the Mad Tea-Party. Shares: really the charcoal-burner does the sharing. homeward trudge; long walk home. cup-nest; a nest shaped like a cup. 11 perchance; obsolete and ridiculous language; Edmund Gosse himself says that his own poems are dead as the dodo (extinct monstrous bird). "idly dance An hour beneath the beeches," on the contrary, dancing is not idle, but hard exercise which no sedate literary critic could keep up for an hour in the open! 12 introspection: looking within ourselves, philosophy. Reflection, probably the

charcoal-burner's thoughtfulness, though he could not put his thoughts into words, was well-meant and issued in kind acts. 13 unsought; people out to seek out such a fine character, but they have not heard of him. Vague: uncertain, but really it is the writer who is vague; he does not quite know what he means.

Metre:

Three lines of four accents and one of three; even lines catalectic (having an extra syllable).

Appreciation:

If you like your poetry *sotto voce*, *mezzo-piano* (Italian, whispering, medium soft) here you have it. Flavoured with stale journalism, garnished with the slick inversions of Wordsworth, rhythm without music and rhyme without note...here is a lovely rubbish heap, children; it doesn't even stink! It has its place in an anthology to show what the other poets have escaped from. Yet didactically (as a lesson) it is not without usefulness. Since pupils are bound to be bored, this will serve to bore them with improving sentiments, not sensual and mystagogic like Browning, or sensual and pagan like Swinburne. It belongs to the reaction of late Victorianism; to us it has all the singular ineptitude of an *aspidistra* (conventional unbeautiful pot plant).

Criticism.

Mr. Gosse makes no pretence to originality. In technique he is invariably exact; and, if he is rarely full of matter, he is not often thin or purposeless. His "Lying in the Grass" is a beautiful nature poem. Mr. Gosse does not make for anything new or original, but his verse takes

a worthy place in English poetry written in the second half of the last (19th.) century. And further, his poems are interesting as a reflection of a period in modern literature, for he is receptive and sensitive to influences. If the poems make for nothing in themselves they are an admirable commentary worth reading apart from the text.

—*Williams*

Gerald Gould:—Wander-thirst.**Summary:**

Whether I am drawn east to the rising sun, or west across the ocean, I cannot remain in one place, because of the wander-thirst.

Its victim may not even know where he is going or what places he has seen; just to see the sun and follow the stars.

Never ceasing, the ships ply round the world and back, returning, with the men in them, older by experience. Perhaps I may return again; but I cannot help going away now.

Appreciation:

The metre and most of the manner, is a very close imitation of Kipling's "Old Trail." Harold Monro, a poet himself, is apparently too young or too high-brow to know Kipling's work; he says that his young friend Gould is influenced by Herrick, Shelley, & Swinburne! There is no line or half a line, no epithet, noun or verb, in this unfortunate example that could not be found in some other more or less pedestrian poet. If you like the worse verse (not the better) of Masfield, you can detect it here; if you know the least alive of R. L. Stevenson's lyrics, here is their authentic echo. Gerald Gould is a Labour Party Journalist, and his alleged poetry is assuredly socialised (divided amongst owners); but it is not so certainly poetic or worth reading.

Notes:

Stanza 1. beyond: purely figurative. Let me be; idiom for let me alone.

dear, is just put in to make the thing scan; "and oh!" in the next line makes it hiccup. Perhaps in the state which most often causes inebriation, these verses would be affecting; so the hiccup is appropriate.

Stanza 2. guide a star: in which case he *does* know where he is going, unless it is the wandering star of Bethlehem. Oh! still hiccuping.

Stanza 3. horizon; the line where sea (or land) seems to join the sky. Old ships...young ships; evidently symbolic for old and young men.

"My main professional interest," he (Gould) writes, "is contemporary criticism, because that is what I am engaged in, week by week, and day by day, and my belief in its utility is based on a faith in what I venture to regard as the permanent standards of criticism. I believe, that is to say, not in the preservation or pursuit of empty forms or conventions, but in the great tradition which expresses essential truth in the inevitable form which the particular expression requires. It follows that I am no believer in experiment for experiment's sake, and I believe the characteristic of some of the newest and most freakish schools, both in poetry and in prose, to be not, as they themselves suppose, a daring novelty, but a weak clinging to formulae which are none the less artificial and conventional for being grotesque. I am, I need not say, heartily in favour of welcoming new forms when they are really the proper dress for new ideas."

—Millet.

The verse of Gerald Gould is of a lyrical character, and is for the greater part subjective. He began and has continued a love-poet, consecrated to the lady of his

dreams, her "flushing cheek," her "red lips" and the "sweetness of her mouth," the "beauty" or "blueness of her eyes."

His language is often metaphorical: "the halls of night"; "the dragging wheels of doom"; "a cloud on love's clear glass." His love-call is passionate and definite. He does not grope with vague sensual hands in the dark. It is the male wooing the "laughing kisses soft and light," of his beloved, his "lady" who is "warm and tender, to be embraced."

Herrick, Shelley and Swinburne have influenced him. His style is not free from the type of conventional word or phrase that has now lost its vigour through abuse: "remembrance sore"; "barren dreams"; "clear utterance"; "long pain"; "omnipotent"; "innumerable"—and "drink your beauty as a man drinks wine." Many of his later poems are more subtle than the early lyrics of simple love.

—*Monro.*

Thomas Hardy. (1) When I set out for Lyonesse.

This sums and paraphrases itself.

Stanza 1 rime—frost, that is, it was winter-time.

spray—branch or twig of tree.

lonesomeness; loneliness.

Lyonesse: Arthur's seat in Wessex, (mythical) notable for Merlin's wizardry.

2 bechance; happen.

sojourn stay for a time at a place.

durst: would dare to.

3 mnte; silent, dumb.

surmise; conjecture or suspicion of the existence or nature of something.

radiance; brightness—of spirit.

fathomless; not to be fathomed, that is, not clearly understandable.

Appreciation:

This is an excellent example of Hardy's supreme ability to suggest mystery, romance, adventure and pathos by very simple means, and his power of conveying drama succinctly (in short phrases). Lyonesse in itself stands for chivalry as well as magic and myth, heroism and selfless service to one's country as well as devotion to exquisite passion; Lancelot and Guinevere as well as the Round Table and the Holy Grail. Hardly any word is richer in secondary associations (that is, not only in what it connotes, but in what has attached to it in literature and folklore.) The added spell of a simple reiterant (echoed) rhythm serves to complete the enchantment. The reader, scanty though his knowledge of history or realisation of

poetic technique may be, is haunted by the simple pregnant lines.

(2) In Time of "The Breaking of Nations." Jeremiah (Bible) Li, line 20. "Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations and with thee will destroy kingdoms".

Notes and explanations:

harrowing; breaking up with iron rakes.

clods: lumps of earth.

stumbles: misses his footing and slips.

nods: shakes his head.

stalk: move stiffly (they were old and rheumatic).

couch-grass; hay, which ferments and smokes in its stacks.

Dynasties: lines of monarchs.

wight; man.

annals; records, history.

ere; before.

"The thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." Ecclesiastes (Bible) i. 9.

"From facts, as he sees them, Mr. Hardy never flinches: and his poetic interpretations of life are often stern and cruel."

Gerald Bullett.

Summary:

Old men stay away from war to till the fields with old beasts; and young folk snatch a respite for the oldest pursuit of all; nature is not denied nor abrogated and shall endure.

Explanation:

There is an old man breaking up the earth for planting (even while nations are being ruthlessly broken). The grass that is ever mown and ever grows again, is fertile and decays in its everlasting order. Not far away, boy and girl seek mating; and such will still obey the Life Force when all the "glory" has departed and "the tumult and the shouting" died.

Criticisms.

Simple winsomeness his poetry very seldom has. Many of his shorter lyrics are mere data. His facts are too alien to win their way into that happy region of belief and acceptance where only poetry can live.

—*Sturgeon.*

Whatever high station he may ultimately hold among English poets, he will hold it equally by reason of his pure lyrical gift touching an immense number of themes, and by reason of the moral earnestness of his work, as notable in this as Wordsworth's own..... Music reigns in his verse; his poetry is, in the strictest sense, written to music. The poetry of Thomas Hardy reveals a prond Englishism which is a conspicuous quality of his landscape, as in Gray, Wordsworth, Arnold and Tennyson.

—*Freeman.*

The reading of many of his poems leaves a firm impress on the imagination. It is not their form that survives in memory. The form is seldom beautiful in itself; it keeps itself strictly to its necessary functions of his empowering the gist of the poem with the potential which poetry requires.

—*Abercrombie.*

Hardy's verse does not differ in essence from prose. His war poetry is not of his best work. War is not congenial to Hardy. Of nature poems, pure and simple, Hardy has none: his theme is Man, Man and his destiny.....occasionally he shows a love for animals that softens his rugged outlines. Many of his poems are character studies reminding one of Browning. His sonnets are invariably admirable, but rhyme too often hampers Hardy.....Of the English poets of the last thirty years, (1890—1920), Swinburne, Thompson, Yeats and Bridges stand definitely above Hardy.....in the matter of pure poetic quality he is probably excelled also by such lesser writers as Stevenson, Henley, Wilde, Alice Meynell, Watson, Masfield, Davies, and De La Mare. By virtue, however, of his grandeur of content, he ranks above these and yield only to the five great poets previously named.

—Duffin.

The main themes of his poetry are the ironies and illusions of life, the inconstancy of man and woman, the disappointment and frustration of human hopes and desires.

—Cunliffe.

The abhorrence of war, the manifold consciousness of human misery, the moving metaphysical realisation of an unknown God and an impassive universe, the painful thrill of time, the curiosity and obsession of past centuries, are with a rich humour the main aspects of his philosophical lyricism.

—Cazamian.

Hardy's basic optimism, paradoxical as that expression must sound to his superficial readers and critics may best be observed in his underlying humanity, in the ground-tone of pity that sounds through all his work.

—Brennecke.

Many critics of Hardy's verse have been prone to say that the poems show in many places defective technique; but this criticism is only true in so far that he was manifestly seeking by experiment to create a new technique, and it should be remembered that the essential poet has always revealed himself by his quest for new metres and new stanzas.

Hardy's are far removed from the literary and artistic ballads, and it is doubtful if any other English poet has come so near to the secret of the ballad as a natural growth, but it is obviously that of a changed world.

Hardy has left behind him a full harvest of verse, considering the amazing and important contribution that he also made to English literature by the more important of his novels.

—Holland.

What he offers is something besides technical mastery of verse or profundity of thought. The something further is in ourselves. Now from one facet and now from another he reflects the sorrow and hope of the ages. In quintessential form the voices human experience. Whether we accept the implications which he himself draws therefrom is not his concern; unlike nearly all his contemporaries he is not didactic. The "broken arc" may present to some minds the promise of the "perfect round" in another sphere of existence. Other minds may see with Hardy the quandary in which humanity labours. It is not the anger or the despair or the consolation of one Self that matters. Let each individual acquiesce or rebel according to his reaction to Circumstance. The Fact remains. It is this sense of the Fact that dominates

Hardy's thought. Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Meredith—each presses upon us his solution of life; and each solution is satisfactory to some minds, rejected by others. Hardy does nothing of the kind. What he gives is a clear-sighted, determined facing and examination of the worst contingencies as well as of the best in the human condition. As in the novels, he poses questions, he confronts problems, he opens up new avenues of thought. He faces Fact; and not the separate isolated fact alone. Each experience is part of a larger one in broadening circles till it embraces the Infinite. Thus are the Past and Present linked together, the meanest insect with the farthest star. Thus is a stellar gauge given wherewith to measure the place and pretensions of humanity.

—Chew.

All poetry comes from 'inner discord'; even the lyric, if it be authentic, is a type of drama, result of a tension between warring forces. In the case of Hardy, the recurrent gloom, recurrent, be it noted, over a long lifetime, suggests that it *suited* Hardy, was, in truth, most congenial to his Muse; it was something that made his creativeness flow most freely and gave to his work its most satisfactory cadences and shape.

Hardy is constantly inviting us to visit new worlds and to contemplate new situations, our contemplation is translated into excitement by the fertility of his *invention*, not by the imagination that makes word-meanings, receding through the world's meanings, it is true, into the profound and profounder reaches of word-making and word-potency.

Much has been made of Hardy's Englishness and it is true that Hardy has taken a corner of England and steeped himself in it till we come to know it as a sort of home; it is true, too, as Mr. Young points out, that his verse 'is steeped in the ancient music of rural England'; but in the handling of his language there is often a turn which seems quite alien to the English tradition, a Latin element, and in its emotional impact as well.

If one of the tests of poetic greatness be a compulsive power in the poetry that annihilates all distractions and translates us inevitably into its 'own' world of reality, above all, the distraction that 'narrows us too physically into awareness of our mortality and the burden of death, Hardy is supreme.

—Aaronson.

Ralph Hodgson: Stupidity Street.

Paraphrase: I was amazed to see people actually selling singing birds' flesh as food. It seemed to me that such people must be doomed to die of famine, as they certainly deserved.

Notes and explanations: open eyes: eyes wide opened in amazement. Stupidity Street: such epithetic (descriptive) names are a common feature of allegories or moral and ethical symbolism. All the names in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* are of this type.

vision: intuitive imagination, not a literal appearance.

worm in the wheat: diseased corn must lead to famine; but probably here the meaning is figurative; *all* that sustains the nation that does such things as eating singing birds is corrupt at the source. "Man shall not live by bread alone."

nothing: but the terrible result is real enough. Those who care more for luxury and fashion's vagaries (extravagances) than for human sympathy and considerateness will surely fail to preserve the supply of necessities sooner or later.

Appreciation: In a very short lyric like this, Ralph Hodgson, who is a real poet of genius, in marked contrast to the poetasters who form the majority, provides the reader with memorable music and a great deal more. The haunting dactylic* rhythm, varied only for beauty's sake, and to enhance clarity (how the two long syllables in 'open eyes' match the shocked astonishment described!) with no variation at all in the number of syllables, holds perfectly-wrought contrasts and antitheses; *singing* birds

'to eat', open eyes and 'vision', the implied luxury of the first stanza, and destitution in the second; all this remarkable skill in handling, flawless ear,[†] and perspicuity, is devoted to so small a piece, which a lesser artist would not think worth while, though he would be mistaken: it achieves an æsthetic satisfaction which we rarely find in any poetry. *Sympathy* with animal life especially with animals abused and exploited by the crass selfishness of men and women, is one of the major notes of this author's work. Perhaps the other is *naturalness*, both of feeling and diction.

[†]dactylic :one emphatic, followed by two light syllables: "shops for the—people to—eat" is two dactyls and a single emphatic syllable at the end.

[†] ear, that is, musical ear or judgment. Most people cannot exactly detect flaws or errors.

Ralph Hodgson: '(2) The Bull

Summary: In the forest once he had led a herd of a thousand. Now a young bull had challenged and thrown him and the herd had passed on. In the evening he recovered consciousness, though "only half the bull he was before". The flies feasted on his blood; soon the birds would eat his flesh. The panorama of his life passed through his dazed mind. As a calf, he had been weak and his mother had had to chase away the vultures. But playing among the other baby bulls he gained strength, and as an adult had never known defeat. All the beasts of the jungle realized his strength and dared not challenge him. His dream of the past is interrupted by the approach of the carrion birds; who come so close that they frighten away the flies, but his heart does not break.

Notes and explanations —

- stanza 1 3 slouching ; moving relaxed and despondently.
- 2 1. cranes ; wading birds with long legs and beaks. gaudy ; with bright plumage. 3. drowsily—sleepily. 5. nutting ; gathering nuts.
- 3 2 offal ; putrefying.
- 3 mess ; a thing disagreeable to the sight.
- 4 burnished ; bright and reflecting like polished metal.
- 5 bladders ; a bull's bladder is about the same size as a football.
- 6 hemlocks : ordinarily a herb ; if ten feet high, shows that the forest is equatorial.
- 4 3 yellowing : the spotted yellow snake makes stripes on the green tree.
- 5 3 lustihood : full development.
- 5 snuffed : smelt at. pawed ; trampled. prostrate ; lying.
- 6 4 carrion ; dead body. 5 'vilely : there is nothing vile about it really ;—we have no right to read our ethics into animal behaviour. This belongs to the pathetic fallacy ; the mistaken idea that animals form opinions, is often found in poetry.
- 7 When : lions prowl and birds rise at *nightfall*.
- 8 3 burning : still hot from the sun. 4. beevish : of bulls.
- 6 slaver : dribbling foam, saliva.
- 10 I dewlap-deep ; as far as the throat. 3 surly--uncivil.
- 19 1 gristles—soft elastic-matters.

2 pow; head. 4—bull; i.e., competitor. 5 flew
his tail; the winner waves it like a flag.

20 6 backed—went back, out of fear.

28 3 daft: nearly mad; he foolishly imagine
he is still able.

29 6 great shadows; vultures.

30 4 turns to meet: his spirit is still unbroken.
he faces the attack.

Additional meanings:

stanza. 11. flapping—flying noisily.

stanza. 12. gaunt—pale and thin.

stanza. 14. lagged—moved slowly.

tottered—shook as if about to fall.

blare—roar, shout.

stanza. 15 maybe—perhaps.

paps—nipples,

sweets and saps—delicious things.

stanza. 16. played at—enjoyed as a sport or game.

butting—striking with the head.

boulder-stones—large round stones.

stanza. 17: knobby—full of protuberances or swellings.

bruise—strike hard or crush.

stanza. 21. bellowed—roared.

stanza. 23. tramping—wandering.

stanza. 24. fen—low marshy land.

buck—male of the deer.

stanza, 26. fingerhooks—sharp claws.

reprimand—reproof, chiding.

stanza. 27. Kills—preys.

ram—a battering engine, here, the bull.

stanza. 29. blusters—makes a noise.

Metre :

Thirty stanzas of six lines each, rhyming ABABCC or ABBACC, seven syllables and four accents to a line, (trochaic). A trochee is a long-short pair of syllables ; the opposite of an iamb, short-long.

Appreciation :

This is a splendid poem. It has the (apparent) simplicity of rare genius. The description of the colours, and beasts of the forest is, literally, gorgeous and convincing.

“And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,
All disputing, go and come ;” is a wonderful characterisation with the extra introductory syllable because monkeys are by nature inconsequent ! It is much harder to describe ugly or silly things well, than beautiful ones. The satisfaction of the reader has to be solely in the aptness of description and tune. The stanzas describing calfhood have a touching tenderness (12-17) and the undertone of horror, the one feature of jungle life that never changes, the “loathly bird..waiting for the flesh that dies.” is never stressed too much, never utterly forgotten. Ralph Hodgson has a power given to few of putting things in a natural way ; there is no sense of strain in his construction. His words too are chosen because they fit, no stringing of epithets ; the phrases are straightforward and simple, but telling and memorable : “bones and leather”, “flashing fingerhooks of steel”, learning how to bruise and bear”—a theory of education in six words !

This poem is rightly described as an epic of the jungle, and more than one competent critic agrees that it is the greatest piece of imagery and symbolism in contemporary poetry." (M. Wilkinson) What is symbolised is the "creative power of life and the wistfulness of its waning into darkness." It may, it should, be long before the poetry of Ralph Hodgson wanes into oblivion.

Criticisms.

One of the few good poets of animal life: his other poems are pure songs: makes his characteristic song out of elementary emotions and ideas. "His Song of Honour" falsely simple—the diction being richer than the content of feelings Cf. Smart's "Song of David".

—Megroz.

His power to visualise, to make almost tangible a poetic conception is great.

—Sturgeon.

The Bull is the life story of an animal told with an intensity of sympathetic feeling such as is but seldom found even in a tale of human life. It might be matched with Masefield's "Raynard the Fox," but Hodgson has no toleration for sport—he loves animals and birds at least as well as he loves his human friends.

—Newbolt.

It cannot be doubted that this sporting phraseology is contributive, in a way, to the popularity of Ralph Hodgson's poetry. While most poets glean their vocabulary from poetry itself, this one gathers his, as it were, raw from life. He owes little to the tradition of English literature, but very much to the traditions of English living. The education of the kennel and prize ring

offers a fitter introduction to his style than any classical learning. Reading him we think: Here is a man who talks only a language of his own, and with such native purity does he use this tongue he knows so well, that he never utters a word of it in a wrong sense, nor fails to make himself clearly understood.

—*Monro.*

Rudyard Kipling : (1) "If"

This is a conversational piece, of advice : *didactic* poetry. To prevent its being dull, and to make it intelligible to the common man, it is written down, that is, put into racy, and, as a matter of fact, slipshod, language. There is in it much fruit of practical experience. As a recipe or prescription for success there is little evidence that to follow these injunctions would ensure any material improvement on that obtained by obedience to earlier and more widely-known systems, such as the advice of Lord Chesterfield or the Sermon on the Mount; what advantage, if any, attaches to Kipling's exhortations as a way of life, seems to be that they are calculated to give the disciple a good opinion of himself. Whether it is self-respect, or a less worthy form of self-pleasing, is possibly a matter for argument.

Contents :

Coolness in emergency, self-reliance with prudence; patience and straightforwardness, good-nature under misrepresentation and spite without priggishness or pomposity :—

Balanced vision, practical reflection, self-possessed indifference to "ups and downs", to the perversion of one's own word for fraudulent purposes, or the dashing of one's hopes only an inspiration to rebuild at any cost :—

Willingness to stake everything on a chance, and lose uncomplainingly, such strength of will as dominates and overcomes boldy exhaustion :—

Popular without flattery, exalted without pride, immune to attack and the embarrassments of unwise

partisanship; able to concentrate energy;—such a man with such qualities has the world at his feet and has attained the end of manhood.

Notes and explanations:

Keep your head, losing theirs...idiom for coolness and undue excitement, respectively. The one-calm person can save a nasty situation, even if he is the butt of uninformed resentment. make allowance...when one is not trusted, prudence is necessary as well as self-confidence born of integrity.

don't look too good; note the grammar has been abandoned; it might be expected to be "not look"; "nor" is also questionable. Probably the mistakes are intentional; the imaginary adviser is supposed to be a rough diamond, a noble character with little education. But even St. Paul, loses sight of grammar when deeply moved.

dream : what we call to have vision; to make dreams your master is to be a *visionary*, not 'make thoughts your aim; the aim is sound *work*.

impostors : Triumph may deceive us into thinking we are better, just as Disaster may make us seem worse, than we really are. The wise man is unmoved by either; he knows that he is doing and will do his best.

" 'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, *deserve it*."

truth.. twisted...trap; for example, a true engineer's report used to influence the stock exchange unscrupulously.

one heap...winnings. The present commentator does

not regard this attitude as desirable. But no doubt selfless daring is sometimes the only hope. "Being a good loser" is easier to praise. the Will...these four lines are the truest of all.

crowds...virtue: democratic politicians find it hard to tell truth.

kings : touch: finding oneself appreciated subtly tempts.
 loving friends; misplaced enthusiasm or undeserved sympathy is dangerous or weakening.
 unforgiving minute: meaning that time is irreparable, as Vergil says, once lost, never regained. Kipling's phrase is first-rate.

which is more: achievement of true manhood is inner, while possessions and success are outward; the inner gain is the greater, and more lasting.

Metre.

Uneven hendecasyllables and decasyllables in octaves (stanzas of eight) and alternate rhymes. It has been said that "the metre does not worthily represent either the sincerity of the thought or the depth of insight which informs the poem." The author's usual style (as here) is that of "Philosophy disguised as facility." That is, he appears to be just letting words run off his pen as a journalist does; he was a journalist on the staff of the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore. But as a matter of fact, his verse enshrines the result of long and deep thought founded on experience and conviction.

(2) *Recessional*. {6 lines of 8 syllables each; iambic tetrameters}.

The title means "for a solemn withdrawing" and has a double significance. No doubt this poem is eminently suitable to be recited or sung at the formal close of any occasion or gathering, such as the ceremonial withdrawing of ministers and singers ("choir and clergy") at a Christian service. But it was composed for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and the main motive is:—"When all is said and done, when the pomp and pageantry is gone, what is left? God grant it may be sincerity!" In this sense also it is a song (or prayer) at, or after, the withdrawing, the recession of outward appanages of power and sovereignty.

Notes :

God of our Fathers; a phrase originally from the Hebrew liturgy (form of words at worship). There is a strong Hebrew (Jewish) or Scriptural tinge throughout this poem, resulting from the implicit belief of the writer that the English are a *chosen* people, destined by God to lead the world in government, just as the Jews were destined by God to lead the world in purity of faith, and to produce the Redeemer. It is not denied by those who hold such beliefs that as a matter of fact both Jews and English have been false to their high vocation (calling) time and again; in fact, the avowed object of such a poem as this is to recall them to faithfulness and humility, and avoid presumption and arrogance.

far-flung: compare "on which the sun never sets."

palm and pine: sea and mountain, or hot and cold
or, north and south, general signif-

icance being the ends of the earth.

tumult : noisy excitement. kings depart : (a) the distinguished visitors go home after the jubilee;

(b) all great men must die, but the nation lives.

ancient sacrifice : Psalm li. 17, sorrow for sin is more acceptable to God than the most lavish ritual.

dune...fire; dunes are sandhills. The primary meaning is that beacons, lighted to celebrate the occasion, died out. One of the symbolised meanings is. that our notable spiritual achievements become forgotten, and we sink into worldliness and self-indulgence.

Nineveh, once capital of the tremendous Asiatic empire of Assyria. now a heap of ruins.

Tyre; once the second city of the world and greatest naval base; now an inferior harbour. (formerly Phoenician, now Syrian)

Reeking tube : he means guns just fired, filled with cordite smoke.

Shard : shell; but he means armour-plate of battle-ships; now-a-days we think of tanks and air fighters in much the same way.

ADDITIONAL WORDS.

Gentiles : a Latin word used in the Bible to mean nations other than the chosen people; see the first Note above. Other peoples may

boast, if it please them; God's people must be humble.

lesser tribes without the law : 'without' may mean not having or it may mean outside (the scope of). In either case such persons and nations are not expected to attain the standard demanded by duty from the English (The most provocative phrase !)

frantic : wildly excited. "Jingoism" was a very real fault when this was written. Subsequently the English have gone to the other extreme of "appeasement" and self-depreciation. Jingoism is "wild tongues", e.g.,

"We don't want to fight. but, by Jingo, if we do,
"We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too !"

Criticisms.

A consummate journalist: errs on the side of copiousness: more a rhapsodist than a pure lyrist. His subject is "Tommy Atkins": brings into limelight the "Greater Britain:" a certain rawness over all his work: his moral though not artistic veracity: moral veracity saves his patriotic verse from rhodomontade: songs of discipline are the noblest.

—Archer.

Vulgar: chanty and crude energy of sound: his hymns of hate and national glory: his 'colonial poetry' has a high place among the Adam Lindsay Gordons and Robert Services. The "Recessional" wears a Biblical mantle with a difference: essentially a prose-writer and story-teller.

—Megroz.

Kipling reasserted the claims of virility and actuality, and, if you like, of vulgarity—that underlying grossness of life which is Nature's safeguard. In that respect Kipling might well be considered a realist. But he was never a realist for realism's sake: he faced facts only because he recognized in them the essentials of romance. This romance he wove into all his finest work. He was undeniably a protest against the artistic intellectualism of the time, with its tendency to enclose life in the conservatory of culture. His romanticism naturally takes under its wing the spirit of youth in its hunger for life. Kipling's song, whatever its immediate subject, is always the song of intrepid man. Kipling's most original and inevitable verse is to be found in his soldier songs.

—*Jackson.*

In 'Recessional' Mr. Kipling speaks for all of us. He has made articulate and noble the unuttered thoughts of England and the Empire.

A great Englishman, great alike in heart, intellect and humanity, penned *Recessional*; but I doubt whether any one who heard the hymn sung at the Victory Thanksgiving was humble or more reverent of heart than the writer. He appears equally encyclopaedically informed on every thing—machinery, children, flowers, boy scouts and girl guides, animals, soldiers, religion, the seven seas and all that belong to East and West.

I ask whether there is a child, be that child eight years old or eighty years young, girl or woman, boy or man—who can read the very wisest, and certainly one of the most wonderful poems that ever was written—If—without

the stirring within him or her of all that makes for girlhood or boyhood, womanhood or manhood, heroism, hardihood, nationhood.

—Kernahan

The poetry of Kipling is essentially verbal. By means of compound words, alliterations, balanced rhythms he sometimes attains powerful effects. But he often attains such effects by letting himself be carried away by his love of words, when his poetry sounds as a noisy display. His poetry is not music, it is an oratorical display full of melodic adornments.

—Lalou.

A careful reading of Mr. Kipling's verse, comparing it subject for subject with his prose, soon convinces us that, far from being a more direct passionate and living utterance than his prose, it is invariably more wrought and careful and elaborate. It does not suggest the poet driven into song. Of his technical success there is seldom any doubt at all.

So far as mere formal excellence is concerned, verse is a journeyman's matter as compared with prose: and it is not at all astonishing to find that the formal part of poetry troubles Mr. Kipling not at all. Poetry flies higher than prose only when the poet's feeling has driven him to sing what he cannot say. Mr. Kipling is a wonderful metrist; but that is not the question. Mr. Kipling's best verse is contained in *Barrack Room Ballads*; but even those do not compare in merit with *Soldiers Three*. (a collection of stories).

—Palmer.

To say that Kipling is a poet of British Imperialism is

to depreciate a great myth-maker and singer of the heroic in human life. But the criticism is exact, though deficient, as Kipling believes himself to have discovered in his race an approximation of all the permanent qualities demanded of man.

Certain English critics hold that Kipling is a great prose-writer and not a great poet; that is, the poetry of Kipling is quite rhythmical and popular like that of Byron but does not represent the true spirit of English poetry. The divine purity of Shelley and Keats has rendered the English indifferent to the varieties of poetry which also have their own beauties.

—*Maurois.*

A good deal of your poetry is dated—hopelessly dated—but there is enough left to furnish a handsome book, and one that will live. Curious it is that the simpler your inspiration the more lasting its appeal; I like best of all your poems, some of those dealing, not with Empire and the tumult of fighting, but with the quiet Sussex downs.

—*Lacon.*

His writing has never appealed to Indians, who see in him a hostile critic. Even the beauties of *Kim* have not absolved him in their eyes. This is partly due to the amazingly persistent misquotation of his "*East is East and West is West.*" Divorced from their context those words are made to convey the exact opposite of the poet's intentions:—

Oh, East is East and West is West and never the
twain shall meet

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great
judgment seat.

But there is neither East nor West, Border nor
Breed nor Birth

When two strong men stand face to face, though they
come from the ends of the earth.

The misquoters have the excuse of interpreting the poet's political outlook rather than the actual significance of his artistic expression. His genius unhappily gave weight to his political prejudices, steeped as they were in racial snobbery and unpardonable ignorance. —*Haward.*

Of K's poetry no doubt much will pass into oblivion, but more that is really great will survive. Among the surviving, I venture to prophesy, will be the poems expressing his intense pride and love, not so much for the material greatness of England's Empire, as for the quiet service, sense of responsibility, kindness and essential unselfishness of the best men of 'Britain' who have made that Empire possible. —*Williams.*

The critical attack on Kipling has proceeded along various lines. The earliest critics—Le Gallienne, for instance—found themselves unable to reconcile the *Recessional* moralities with the "cold Christ and tangled trinitities," or what they called 'the spirit of sacred imperialism, with the 'non-Christian cynicism' they encountered elsewhere. They fell foul of him, in a word, because he was not 'consistent.' How should he be? Kipling was writing of a thousand differing moods and matters; for the time being, in each case, he was the man of the mood and the matter concerned. Words, ideas, pictures—the whole raging torrent of creation—swept him away. He was not above feeling what he ought to be feeling for the purpose of the work under

immediate contemplation; he could work up *ad hoc* nostalgias and enthusiasms for contraries. To demand consistency from a purely imaginative writer is to tie him for ever to a single story, to debar him from the lure of words *qua* words, to deny him his inalienable right to forget himself. Edmund Gosse said Kipling was not an honest craftsman; but in fact he was true to his craft first and to reality only thereafter. Ernest Newman saw this better than most; 'Kipling's inner consciousness,' he wrote (Free Review, December 1st, 1893), 'masquerades in many forms.' It is true; there *are* many forms and the consciousness *is* masquerading. From this his so-called 'contradictions' follow. To call him 'insincere' is absurd; the only way in which the imaginative writer can be sincere is by being, for the moment, the character he is, for the moment, presenting.

—Brown.

John Masefield:

(1) A Consecration.

Summary:

The author devotes his poetry to celebrating slaves and helots, wage-slaves and menials, labourers and common folk. He is not interested in the usual subjects of laudation, potentates, dignitaries, and field-m Marshals. Others may sing about their ostentation and ceremonial, their riches and feasting, if they want to; as Jesus would say, "they have their reward." But courage, endurance, and suffering are fit and worthy themes for true poetry.

Notes and explanations:

prelates; slightly contemptuous word for bishops. *periwigged charioteers*; often in Europe State Coaches are driven and attended by servants wearing artificial and powdered hair. The Indian equivalent would be "bedizened elephants". (The first Metropolitan Bishop of India, Reginald Heber the poet, did tour the peninsula on an elephant and with a large retinue.)

laurelled: wreaths of laurel were a great distinction in classical times. (laurel is an evergreen bush containing arsenic. to lap the fat: contemptuous metaphor; lapping is what dogs do to soup. fat means profit.

hemmed in: confined, unable to escape because detained by force.

tattered: in rags. This verse is worth learning by heart *be-medalled*: hang with medals. Goering is said to have no room for them all on his uniform!

cock-horse: (a) astride (b) looking "cocky", that is, overproud. The epithet is ludicrous to Englishmen because

it occurs in a nursery rhyme:—"Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross, To see a fine lady upon a white horse; Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes. She shall have music wherever she goes!"

koppie: a casual spelling of *kopje*, South African hill.

There was much loss of life in the South African (Boer) War, as the English generals were inefficient, and worse.

ranker: one of the ranks, lowest. tramp; wanderer, vagrant.

stoker: one who feeds the furnace with fuel.

clout: rough dirty cloth.

chantyman: sailor who gives the time for hauling, leading the chanty or sea-chant. **bent**: because he must work as well as sing.

haliards (haul-yards): ropes for hauling, that is, raising and lowering sails.

portly: fat, this line is a stock example of "alliteration's artful aid".

girth: measurement round the stomach.

dross: base metal of ore, compared to the precious metal required.

scum: the rubbish floating on molten metal, till it is raked off. A common term of abuse.

mould: earth.

Appreciation:

This is a very fine specimen of metrical invective, of the passion that underlies true socialism and love of one's fellowmen. It suffers from being too clever; one's attention is diverted to the laughableness of the images referring to the rich and powerful, and it is difficult to be serious and sympathetic again about the "underdogs", the overworked and exploited masses. In a certain mood of exaltation it is tremendously effective; but calmly and

dispassionately considered, it lacks much that any "consecration" should have of dignity and (this above all) self-restraint. A holy offering to whatever gods there be, or to truth, beauty and justice, the eternal values, is marred if there is any suggestion of self-satisfaction, or indulgence of spleen about it. There is no doubt that Kipling has done this sort of thing a great deal better. His poor men and simple folk have dignity; his appreciation of factory, machine, or labour on the soil raises our imagination to fresh heights. Masfield always seems to be the man in a hurry when he touches social questions. Perhaps this impression is justified; he has produced an enormous volume of work, much of it memorable. Nor can it be denied that this piece under consideration has eminently that quality or memorableness, just as it has cogent sincerity and pungent wit. After the wry smile of Hardy and the wander-thirsty Gould, the quenchless streams of Drinkwater and the sedate saunter of Gosse, there is a strong clear breeze blowing through this work which is almost the wind of God.

Metre.

The metre consists of three-line stanzas of five accents each, most of the feet dactyls (long-short-short) with an additional heavy syllable at the end (of each line). The final triplet has a fourth line and Amen, in keeping with the title. All the lines of each stanza have one rhyme

N. B.—This poem is put first in the *Collected Poems* of the author.

(2) *Cargoes.*

"In this poem the author's purpose is *not* to contrast the inglorious present with the glorious past, but to claim

for the "dirty British coaster" even whilst fully admitting the prosaic associations of its cargo, kinship with the brave merchant adventurers of all ages."

—J. H. Fowler.

Metre.

Six accents in lines 1 and 2. two accents in lines 3 and 4, five accents in the fifth line. The verse begins rapidly and slows down, ending in three consecutive stressed syllables. Note that there are many 'r's and 's's in the first stanza (liquids) and many 'h's, 'g's, and 't's and 'd's in the last (gutturals and dentals) subtly to convey the contrast between the slipping over quiet waters and fighting through a gale

Quinquireme: properly spelt *quinquereme*: a galley with five banks of oars. As a matter of fact (a) only Greeks and Romans used them; the Assyrians, a riverine people, hardly had even biremes (two banks): (b) they were warships, not trading vessels, the oars being for speed, and would leave very little room for the apes and peacocks.

Ophir: the Hebrew (Jewish) Scriptures often mention it as a gold port, and in 1 Kings, X, 22, the navy of Hiram (Phoenician king of Tyre) brought *ivory and apes and peacocks*. The woods and wine are mentioned elsewhere.

haven: port or harbour.

Isthmus: of Panama.

diamonds, emeralds, amethysts; transparent white, brilliant green and purple or violet precious stones. Topazes mostly yellow.

moidores are Portuguese coins (the same word as ("mohur"))

coaster: a tramp steamer that goes along the coast from port to port smoke stack; chimney.

butting: steaming against the wind is rather like a goat putting its head down

mad March: a very windy month "comes in like a lion; goes out like a lamb." Also there's a saying "Mad as a March hare."

pig bad: lead cast, or for casting, in pigs.

ironware: such things as saucepans.

Appreciation:

This short lyric is probably deservedly famous; it shows the full development of Mr. Masfield's powers. There is a contrast (the highbrows call it a "crisis") of time between each verse; also a further contrast of climate and weather, Mediterranean, tropic, British maritime; and as the title leads us to expect, the diverse freights of distant centuries and empires, Solomon's for furniture and feasting, the Don's fabulous riches to lay the foundation of modern European capitalism, and the tough Free Trader with the commodities of industry and necessities for the industrialised. More than ever we are reminded of Edmund Spenser, the only begetter of Masfield's larger manner. But there is more than a devotion to beauty and romantic imagination. In imagery "without saying a word about it," as M. Wilkinson comments; "there is conveyed a sense of the growth of democracy through the ages". All that fues for a temple and a palace on a hillside; tons of tons of treasure for a minority of far-sighted upper-class entrepreneurs; and now a miscellany of mineral adjuncts to the life of the million;—it repays study. Yet Louis Unter-

meyer can call it a light satire! The fact is, we get out of criticism only what we bring to it; without love for delicate artistry, how can one perceive it? But it is here and much more delight beside.

Criticisms.

He is in a sense the most important figure. It is a paean of zest for life, of the intense joy in actual living which seems to be the dynamic of M.'s genius.

—Sturgeon.

Has not contributed much to recitative poetry: his style more literary: *sensational journalism in verse*. His melodramatic exaggeration and literary faults are, more than Newbolt, Kipling, and Noyes, responsible for his popularity: the poetic impulse sustained better by his brief lyrics, e.g., "Lollington Downs"—a sonnet sequence: a twentieth-century Morris.

—Megroz.

His method in writing, whether narrative, dramatic, lyrical, or reflective, shows the ready-and-willing practical character of the Englishman. *The Wanderer* is the most convincing sea-poem in the language, and "1914" the most profoundly patriotic.

—Newbolt.

Though he is a poet and a beauty-worshipper, not Apollo nor Venus stands most often at John Masefield's side, to guide his pen, but Fate.

Mr. Masefield—no 'minor' poet—seems to me the most Shakespearean of his contemporaries. Again and again he startles the reader by some vivid supplementary picture, some pregnant 'aside' of psychological insight. His poems are, for the most part aflush with the joy of life.

—Kernahan.

You have always been more concerned with matter than with manner, with what you had to say rather than the phrasing of it.

You are jealous of authority. In the "*Consecration*" prefixed to your book of collected verse you put down your preferences clearly. One may deduce from this that you are no out-and-out admirer of the gilded and decorated staff, and further, that you intend to speak out plainly what you mean regardless of the conventions that used to insist on what was sometimes called "poetical" language. The poets of our youth would never have written that line ".....the broken heads and the blood running into their eyes" They would have dressed it up somehow so that we should not meet it in all its nakedness. Nor would their commander have ridden "cock-horse" to parade nor would they have spoken of a 'koppie'. "Kopje" perhaps—if they were writing soon after the Boer War. But Mosefield's muse has nothing of the dressmaker about her. If we pronounce the thing like that, we'll spell it like that, without pretence.

It may be admitted that, in your earlier poems, you carried realism rather far in places. Your "*Salt-Water Ballads*," I imagine were more or less inspired by Kipling's barrack-room verses, but they were even more unrestrained in the violence of their language.

The sea haunted you, as it haunts so many who have served it. There are passages scattered here and there among your poems that witness to its power.

The long narrative poem had not received much attention of recent years, since the death of John Davidson. Modern readers of verse did not seem to possess the healthy.

appetite of their forefathers and it had almost become a canon of the amateur critic that a long poem was a contradiction in terms. It was left to you to revive this form of verse, and to set upon it your own seal.

And although your prosody is not impeccable, by our old standards, you have written a few sonnets that may live—if indeed sonnets continue to be read at all.

—*Lacon.*

Spontaneity is the essence of his art, and he carries the lack of self-consciousness to a fault. He owes much of his success to his vigorous narrative gift. Religion has always inspired some of his greatest poetry. The inspiration which Masfield has drawn from his birth-place is vividly apparent in his work. During his wandering years he saw the naked worst of life, and drank experience to the lees. 'Modernist' in range and method, Masfield is spiritually in the tradition of the great Victorian and pre-Victorian poets. "Realistic" in range of subject-matter and in method, he is passionately idealistic in purpose; he is one who knows that action without vision is always futile, and often harmful. He is in the succession of the great English poets, from Chaucer and Shakespeare downwards, who have taken the whole full-blooded life of man for their domain. His passionate concern is with the soul of man. The manner of Masfield's early poems was that of Mr. Kipling, and Mr. Kipling suggested the sea and the common sailor as the theme. Masfield holds a unique place in English poetry as its first deep-water sailor. His love poems breathe a passionate sincerity and humility. The sonnets in *Lollingdon Downs* discuss the mystery of life and death, and the apparent warfare between body

and spirit. The vital breath of poetry, which craftsmanship cannot of itself produce, blows vitality far his pages. At heart he is a romantic, in the sense of celebrates a lover of story-telling, though he is also a poet that philosopher who cannot help turning story-telling, cut spiritual account. Masfield is no Chestertonian mediævalist. He is an eloquent champion of much that is modern. He has greatly extended the range and resources of poetry as an interpretation of hidden beauty in common life, and has laid foundations upon which future poets may, perhaps, build more perfectly.

—Thomas.

Probably his finest work is, not the narratives, striking and colourful as they are, but the lyrics and sonnets in which his perpetual quest for beauty, the love of the English country-side, and his brooding upon curious man and his fate are the most frequently recurring subjects. Masfield's reputation will suffer, is, indeed, already suffering not only from the overabundance of his work, but also from its lack of distinction and its technical casualness. In poetry, nothing short of perfection in its kind is long tolerable, and Masfield's too frequently falls far short of it.

—Millett.

Wilfred Owen : Anthem for Doomed Youth.

Sonnet : ABAB¹CD²CD E³FFEGG

In Christian countries a bell is rung when anyone dies, to call for prayer for the departing soul; this is the *passing-bell*. A fine funeral (and the poorest will scrape and save to have more to spend on it) must include *choral singing* of the Psalms for the Dead. The Priest is attended by two acolytes (assistants) with tapers (mediaeval *candles*) in their hands, lighted. The coffin, in which the body is placed, occupies a prominent position, and is covered with a large purple or black embroidered cloth called a *pall*. The clear understanding of these four ceremonial points, bell, candles, choir, pall, is necessary to the explanation of the poem.

die as cattle : this was written in the third year of the 1914-18 war, when disillusionment and reaction from high-flown patriotism had set in.

monstrous anger : the deafening noise suggests anger.

orisons : prayers; Roman priests, who have to get through many thousands of words of set prayers, often gabble or patter (repeat indistinctly.)

mockeries : Owen considers the elaborate ceremonies unreal and insincere in face of the fact of death.

demented : as of a madman.

bugles : In *military* funerals it is usual to have buglers sound the "Last Post" or good-night call.

sad shires : the citizen armies were mainly country-folk,

because the indispensable technical reality far
 who could not join the army were celebrated
 townsfolk.

glimmers : faint light like a candle.

pallor : paleness. bloodlessness. When girls hear of
 their lovers are dead, they pale. (For *virgins*, this
 pall may be white).

flowers : wreaths are given by everyone interested in a
 funeral.

tenderness of patient minds : patience implies strength
 which, in spite of itself, yields to grief.

drawing-down of blinds : another custom is to veil the
 windows of a house where
 death has occurred. These
 soldiers died in the trenches,
 not in a house; but Nature
 mourns for them.

Appreciation :

A powerful expression of the horror of the incalculable slaughter of youth (now how much more ?) very different from the ardour and exaltation of Rupert Brooke two years earlier. While terrible in its presentation of atrocious misery, it is triumphant in its spiritual truth. "Nothing should need to be said about such poetry. Critical comment may well seem to be an impertinence" (Wilkinson). There is restraint and there is passion; and there is behind the assumed cynicism a faith in human purpose, a belief in human reverence, a conviction that the ghastly trappings of mass murder are no more a final and irrevocable denial of beauty and righteousness, than the traditional ceremonies are an adequate affirmation of them.

Criticisms.

The restrained passion as well as the pitiful outcries in Owen's poetry have a spiritual kinship with Sassoon's stark verses. They reflect the second stage of the War, when the glib patter wears thin and the easy patriotics have a sardonic sound in the dug-outs and trenches. "He never," writes Sassoon, "wrote his poems (as so many war poets did) to make the effect of a personal gesture. He pitied others; he did not pity himself."

"Strange Meeting," "Miners," and the poignant "Futility" illustrate, beneath their emotional content, Owen's great fondness for assonance. He was continually experimenting with devices to enrich or take the place of rhyme, testing alliterative consonants as substitutes for the prepared and often monotonous matching of vowels. Almost half of his volume is a record of such unique and surprisingly successful experiments. But it is the nobility, the profound sympathy, compassionate without ever becoming maudlin, that gives Owen's verse a place among the authentic poetry of his day. "Dulce et Decorum Est" is obviously a reaction against the "glory" of war; but it is bigger than its subject, something far beyond a protest, surpassing its program.

It is difficult to choose among Owen's few but compelling poems. "Apologia pro Poemate Meo", "Greater Love", "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and the rythmed suspensions already mentioned, will live beyond the tragic events during which they were created. Time has already found a high place for them.

—Untermeyer.

"His (Owen's) battlefield emotions have a reality far beyond conventional patriotism. His poetry celebrates the intense comradeship flowering in the isolation of that remote, fantastic, horrible world in which men lived cut off from the timidities and decencies and comforts of civilian life. The honesty and authenticity of Owen's observations and emotions are enhanced by an individual technique, especially apparent in his handling of metre and his substitution of consonance for rhyme."

He denounced the idea that his war studies were poetry. "My subject is War," he wrote, "and the pity of War. The poetry is in the pity."

—Millelt.

James Stephens : Hate.

Summary :

Two who hated each other met. snarled, and made to turn away. One said to the other that at long last they would find that they had no reason to hate each other. But the one addressed (the speaker of the poem) fled, being tempted to fall on his neck and embrace him.

Note :

This is *not* a war poem. It deals with Irish feuds; whether political, religious. or family is not stated.

Notes :

writhing : twisting and turning like a snake.
grimace : savage expression.

bitter heart and savage : what immediately follows shows that this is ironical. So far from being bitter and savage. he is dispassionate and reflective, and even patient ("waiting to hear.")

Appreciation :

This is a fragment of precious insight. The futility and unreasonableness of hatred is quietly but compellingly expressed. The observation and psychological understanding evident in the conclusion, when the speaker runs away rather than surrender his cherished and unjustifiable resentment refusing to give way to the promptings of natural human brotherliness and sympathy, probably because it would wound his false pride, is as true as it is rare in writers.

Metre :

The general effect is dramatic and Shakespearean; well suited to the subject. There are seven lines of a

fewer number of feet, the others (11) being pentameters, but all are pure iambic. Most of them rhyme in couplets, indeed, only line five, exceptionally, rhymes with the short lines one and two.

Criticisms.

His poetry is characterized by his capacity for unexpected depths, cultivated baldness and playfulness of manner. He is perhaps mainly a poet of childhood reminiscent of English poets from Spenser to Browning. Not even his countryman Yeats has more frequently justified the admiring astonishment implied in the verdict "Miracle". Most of modern nature poetry beside his is tame.

—*Megroz.*

One finds in him the true Hibernian blend of grotesquerie and grandeur, pure fantasy and shining vision. His lyric moods may be as tender and fanciful as those of Yeats and are always more spontaneous than those of his countryman. His ideas are violently in contrast with one another. He has a grave intensity of vision, a passion for liberty and a courageous faith in the future of the race. While Mr. Yeats lives delicately in a romantic past, while poor Synge lived tragically in a sardonic present, this poet stands on his "Hill of Vision" and cries to the world the good tidings of a promised land.

—*Sturgeon.*

His "A Prelude and a Song" is as subtle a piece of art as can be found among the poets who have written in English.

—*Newbolt.*

Mr. Stephens is neither a pessimist nor a despondent wankling. He has looked at the worst and gladly remains an optimist.

—*Williams.*

In one of his prefaces he says: The task of the poet is neither to express nor to explain, but to *intensify* life. His is a revolt not against the traditional idealism of his race, but against the abuse of that idealism as well as mysticism and symbolism. After the ecstasies of mystics and speculations of visionaries here is a return to living and suffering humanity; by a natural reaction and in the same idealistic fashion the hymn to free and intense life has taken the place that was once occupied by dream and reverie at the hands of his predecessors.

—Paul-Dubois

Traces of Blake are in the later Stephens; the poet, discarding his light grotesquerie, becomes the seer. A less amusing singer is the result, but a more impassioned one. In youth Stephens delighted in gay mischiefs, pranking with unnatural phenomena; in maturity he is concerned with nothing less than elemental truths.

Stephens's final characteristic is his delightful blend of incongruities—he successfully mingles the bizarre, the buoyant and the profound. No more vigorous imagination has come out of Ireland since J. M. Synge.

—Untermeyer.

Robert Louis Stevenson: (1) The Celestial Surgeon.

Summary:

The writer prays to be "stabbed broad awake" if he has hesitated in his duty of showing and spreading happiness. He ought to have responded to happiness in others, and been thankful for dawn, books, food and rain. But probably his heart has been sullen. Rather than lose the things of the spirit, the writer prays that pain, or even sin, with all its consequences, may visit him to arouse his perceptions.

Notes :

morning face : from Shakespeare, As You Like It.

knocked : the familiar metaphor of the closed door.

obdurate : hardened. It is not clear how Stevenson scanned this line : in any case it is harsh. "too" ends in a long vowel ; "obdurate" begins with a short one ; does he want a crasis (literally mixing) into one syllable or an equally objectionable hiatus (gap) ? If the first, "obdurate" must be pronounced Scotch fashion with the accent on the second syllable, as in "enduring" ; if the second "obdurate" can be pronounced correctly with the stress on the first syllable, like obstinate. Thus W. S. Gilbert:—

"But if you remain callous and obdurate I

Shall perish as he did, and you will know why !"

The Mikado.

But in that case in Stevenson's poem. the remainder of

the line is an unseemly scamper. The actual *metre* calls for little notice, being seven couplets, rhyming, of iambic tetrameters (8-Syll.)

Appreciation :

There is a persuasive charm, a pellucid lustre about this little piece. The sentiment, that creatures have a duty of cheerfulness, is not deep, but easy to grasp, and instantly popular. The corollary that dulness and a sombre outlook proceed from lack of observation, is pleasant encouragement for those who are naturally cheerful. Though we are conscious that there is nothing profound about it that need not deter us from simple enjoyment. At least we know that Stevenson's cheerfulness was genuine, because he suffered all his life from weak health and died of consumption.

(2) Home no more home to me.

Paraphrase :

1. Where can I go ? I must earn my living or starve. Long ago mine was a hospitable house and those who visited me were both wise and kind. We sat round the fire in friendship; but now they are gone.

2. It was a happy place for a child to grow up in, sheltered from the winter wind, warm, bright, and beautiful with music. All that is over.

3. The winter weather will pass and spring come again ; but I myself shall not be there.

Metre :

The haunting cadences suggest many well-known Scottish songs. Six accents followed by four, in eight-line stanzas.

Heather is a purple or white low springy shrub, faintly scented, the glory of British hills and mountains. *Roof-tree* means pillar or rafter. *Glittered*; gleamed and shone. *Palace* : Figurative. *Brow*; top. Moor-fowl; water-birds; all Scotland is wet. Twitter ; bird-talk.

Little can be said to enhance the beauty of this plaintive song. The pathos is unaffected and moving : the melody exactly appropriate. When more ambitious efforts are discarded, this will remain to prove that "R. L. S." had the root of the matter ; it is true, sincere, simple poetry.

R. L. Stevenson : (3) Requiem,

(Latin word meaning "rest" (objective); first word of Christian Mass for Departed Souls--"Rest" eternal grant to them, O Lord." 'grave : in other editions thus with the apostrophe : short for engrave (on tombstone).

Paraphrase.

I should like to be buried, not in a solemn fane like Westminster Abbey, nor in a shut-off churchyard or cemetery, but in the open. I loved nature, and believed that life is happiness ; and having lived it to the full, I was neither afraid nor unwilling to lay it down.

Make my epitaph like this : Here lies one who has attained his heart's desire. He voyaged afar, but came safe home (to God ?) at last. He had to climb steeply and long to achieve his quest, but he succeeded by the help of God. Now he can rest satisfied and content.

This is pure symbolism. The sweeping vault of heaven, the silence that is death; the venturesome voyage, the arduous hunt (an *individual* hunt, like that of

pioneers in Canada, or after deer in Scotland ; not to be confused with what an Englishman means by hunting, which is riding to hounds after a fox);—all these are to be referred to spiritual worlds of desire, effort, and satisfaction. The simplicity is the simplicity of genius; and the note of fulfilment rings true.

Metre.

Three lines of four accents ; one line of three accents. *with a will; gladly, readily.*

Criticisms.

Stevenson's poetry hardly calls for serious attention.

—*Cunliffe.*

Charles Dickens gave us the romance of childhood in prose by releasing the eternal child from the bondage of deformity; and the enfranchised spirit lives, and sings, and plays with its fellows, in Stevenson's smiling verses.... Plangent and picturesque as the verse of Stevenson is, he seldom, I think, lights upon the "only words in the only order" and his finest and most romantic strains seem to bear the hammer-mark of the wielder of strong prose harmonies, rather than the serene touch of the born singer to the lute.

"A kind of prose Herrick divested of the gift of verse, and you behold the Bard," said Stevenson, in a letter to a friend, of himself.

—*Cornford.*

Stevenson, fully valued or even overvalued as a writer of English prose, has not yet received all the recognition due to him as a poet.

—*Fowler.*

Edwards Thomas : Words.

Summary :

Stanza 1. The poet asks the English words to choose him among the rhymesters. Winds whistle through a tiny crack in a wall or even a lowly drain, perhaps expressing happiness, perhaps grief; so let the words choose the writer.

Stanza 2. English words are not heavy (like the Latin derivatives) nor weak nor cheap. They have the rarity of gold, the colour and life of poppies and corn, the pleasant comfort of a well-worn garment; they sing, and refresh one like the sight and fragrance of roses.

Stanza 3. They seem to contain the past and future; they remind us of what we were, and yet are always fresh, like a flowing stream, and redolent of the good earth.

Stanza 4. There are dialect words, words of Welsh bardic lore, county place-names and local terms. The poet asks them to let him dance, that is, enjoy their rhythm; climb, that is, seek higher things through their inspiration; or stand in ecstasy as poets do, that is, maintain a level contemplation of beauty.

Explanations :

Their joy or their pain To whistle through; the prose grammatical arrangement would be—as the winds (make) use (of) a crack in a wall or a drain to whistle their joy or their pain through. Symbolism: a crack is insignificant, a drain has a noisome though necessary function. The poet is being almost excessively modest in describing himself as a chink or a run-off, but he was really modest.

unassuming, and self-distrustful. Till he was thirty-four he doubted his own powers and wrote only criticism.

Light as dreams: English words, by comparison with the Latin derivatives that fill Shakespeare, Milton, and the dictionaries, are on the whole shorter, nor do they have so many long vowels, Abounding in guttural and other consonants, they are certainly tough. To patriotic minds they are precious, and to scholars. Poppies and corn; the red among the gold is a common feature of the English landscape, and much loved. Note "our birds." Thomas, like Kipling, Belloc, Chesterton, Drinkwater and most recent poets who have established themselves, shares the "cult of the locality" which characterises present poetry and is a permanent feature of popular songs (Tipperary, Tennessee, etc.) This is a new thing, quite alien to Greek, Roman, or other early Caucasian cultures. Perhaps nostalgia (homesickness) is induced by industrialism, which takes people away from their homes.

Burnet (same as brunet), rose. Red white and deep cream, toning into brown, are the commonest shades of roses. A "Christmas rose" actually blooming all the year round is common in Wales, where Thomas came from. It is a lovely golden brown shade.

Strange as the races of dead and unborn: We do not know much about the past, so the dead are strange to us; nor about the future. Familiar.....faces... ..lost homes: One knows the old English words from childhood, but they never lose their air of originality. For 'lost homes' see above, on 'our birds.' Yew is an immortal tree often planted in burial places. "Old as the hills" is a trite saying, but the poet pleasantly varies it.

Worn new is a brilliant oxymoron, or juxtaposition (placing together) of opposites. A less inspired writer might have put "polished." "Which you prove that we love:" A large majority of Old English words are concerned with tillage and agriculture. Wales whose nightingales have no wings: a pregnant and delightful saying, but no one really knows what it means; perhaps that the Welsh poems are not exported or known abroad. Poetry and music reach a very high level and among all classes in Wales. Every year there are public competitions called *Eisteddfods*. But as the North Welsh and South Welsh vocabularies are very different, and the language, even including its cousins Breton and Cornish, only spoken by a few hundred thousand people, Welsh literary achievements are not generally appreciated.

Wiltshire, containing Stonehenge. greatest relic of Neolithic (or perhaps earlier) religion; Sarum or Salisbury, perfection of Gothic architecture and scene of mediaeval Christianity's greatest liturgical and musical accomplishment, is naturally rich in history and has a considerable local vocabulary. Kent; where all the invaders come; consequently battles and heroic memories. Also still, in spite of coal and cars, a stronghold of fruit-growing, oyster beds, and fishery. The result is plenty of striking words and picturesque speech. Herefordshire; on the "marches" (frontiers) of Wales, and also rivalling Kent for apples and hops, brewing Cider and Beer. These immemorial trades have nouns and adjectives of their own, all terse but attractive.

Dance...climb...stand: see Summary above, last four lines.

Fixed and free in a rhyme; it is the poet not the ecstasy that is fixed in ecstasy while free to sing his rhymes, which flow abundantly with English words.

Appreciation :

This is a beautiful example of a lyric. It cannot be called easy; by contrast with all the rest of this author's work, which is concerned with nature and simple things, it is difficult for the general reader. But the seemingly casual, really adroitly calculated, metre and diffuse rhyme-scheme delight the ear, while the short lines help the eye; and the meaning grows on one, indeed, there is so much depth concealed in the simplicity that one can return after years and find more. In fact, like all true poetry, it is written from, and speaks to, profound experience. Some highly endowed artists can have such *experience intuitively* by instinctive penetration; the rest of us earn it and learn it slowly and painfully, although the prize is aesthetic satisfaction obtainable in no other way. Although the national and even regional preoccupation of a word-dealer tends to limit his appeal (as he says, his native nightingales have no wings) still we in India can enjoy the melody and admire the delicate tracery of pattern in this unique lyric. Those of us who have found that the English tongue does in a remarkable way include all the Caucasian inheritance and is a supple and responsive medium for Aryan thought as a whole rather than the dialect of some remote, if acquisitive and bellicose islands, can derive pleasant stimulation and encouragement from the consummate artistry and obvious sincerity of this poem.

Criticisms.

Loving, like Frost, the *minutiae* of existence, the quaint and casual turn of ordinary life, he caught the magic of the English countryside in its unpoeticized quietude. Many of his poems are full of a slow, sad contemplation of life and a reflection of its brave futility. It is not exactly disillusion; it is rather an absence of illusion. *Poems* (1917), dedicated to Robert Frost, is full of Thomas's fidelity to little things, things as unglorified as the unfreezing of the "rock-like mud," a child's path, a list of quaint-sounding villages, birds' nests uncovered by the autumn wind, dusty nettles. Whatever the subject, the lines glow with a deep and almost abject reverence for the soil.

Thomas must be reckoned among the most natural—and most English—of nature-poets. As de la Mare wrote, "When Edward Thomas was killed in Flanders, a mirror of England was shattered of so pure a crystal that a clearer and tenderer reflection can be found no other-where than in these poems". Behind the accuracy of observation there is an emotional tensivity, a vision of things seen "not with but through the eye."

—Untermeyer.

1. Look for an extremely personal experience underlying most of the poems. Observe how it is freshly realized without the interference of literary convention.

2. Consider the question whether or not Thomas's poems were an escape from his critical work or merely the emotional expression of what is intellectually phrased in his criticisms.

3. Observe as you read what a clearly defined personality stands out from the poems. An interesting study of Thomas's character could be based upon them alone.

4. Study the adaptation of the metres to the ideas, and form a judgment as to the author's skill.

5. Consider the use and omission of ornament. Do all the lines contribute to the impression or are some added for their own sensuous beauty?

6. Consider the diction. Is it poetic? Is it prosaic? Is it the language of everyday life? What is it?

7. Note the recurring ideas and construct from them Thomas's philosophy,

—*Manly & Rickert.*

He was the scholar gipsy of his time. He loved his country—he did not so much inhabit England as haunt it. His poems are haunting too: if an Englishman must go into exile he should not take them with him, or he will never have a quiet heart. They have the peculiarly pungent scent of some old-fashioned flowers and herbs; they prick memory like a thorn touched unawares. Most of us have from time to time verified with delight the impressions which Thomson, Crabbe, Clare, and Barnes have left us of the life and landscape of their country, but even the best of their work is seldom more than something given from outside; the life and landscape of Edward Thomas's England is, as it were, awaked out of our blood where it has been sleeping for centuries.

Most poets write verse before they have either experience or ideas: they go some way towards forming a style which is in the air—unrelated to any need for

expression. Thomas, on the contrary, seems to have used prose as long as he found it sufficient, and at last, when the necessity arose, he passed almost unconsciously, and without effort, to forms of verse which he made under the compulsion of his subjects. Of reminiscences, tricks of the trade, even of conscious technical skill, he seems to have had almost nothing.

—*Newbolt.*

Edward Thomas' complex personality makes him a difficult subject to write upon...And what pains he took over writing, even if it was the most trivial thing. In this respect he can set an example to many young modern writers who know so much and read their classics so little. That intense thoroughness about everything he did was almost a German trait in Thomas' character. To think of him as a Welshman seems rather remote to me, for he loved England very dearly. And his poetry might even be compared with English food: plain, without spices, but with all the extravagance of her home-grown flavours.

—*Hartleben.*

Francis Thompson: (1) In No Strange Land.

St. one: view...touch...know...clutch are the English positives corresponding to the Latin negatives intangible, etc. The four-fold paradox is illustrated in the remaining stanzas.

St. two: fishes to fly must leave their natural element, as must eagles to plunge. Man's natural element is earth, not the stars; and it is on earth that we can find the angels.

St. three: wheeling systems darken: astronomers describe and calculate the positions of dark, presumably burnt-out, stars. The most recently-discovered planet is also invisible. benumbed conceiving: intellectual conception is meant; and the immense size of astronomical distances makes the mind numb; we cannot follow them with lively interest. Drift of pinions: Robert Keable has written a striking book of short stories with this title, all describing actual cases of angelic intervention. The literal meaning is "Current of (angels') wings". Clay-shuttered: Bodies are often, in Christian symbolism, described as clay. Our physical senses are a barrier to spiritual perception, like shutters to light. Beats...doors; a startling intensification of the metaphor "Behold I stand at the door and knock" (Christ).

St. four: See List of Explanations at the end of the book.

St. five But when (thou art) so sad thou canst not (be) sadder...Cry (pray)...thy so sore loss is the extreme sadness referred to. Jacob's ladder; Jacob, afterwards known as Israel, was the younger son of Isaac, and grandson of Abraham, and the progenitor of the Jewish nation.

Wandering in the desert for fear of his brother Esau, whom he had tricked, he dreamed of "the angels of God ascending and descending", a favourite subject for artists. Genesis, chapter 28. Charing Cross was in Thompson's time much more than a rather questionable neighbourhood, though adjoining Strand, Trafalgar Square, and Whitehall. The three separate railway systems of Southern, Metropolitan-District, and Tube (deep) intersecting produce much traffic.

St. six: In Hebrew literature, which is two-thirds of the Bible and the inspiration of the remainder, the soul is generally feminine. A woman sick with hæmorrhage and ruined by doctors' fees once touched Christ's garment by the hem and was instantly healed in a crowd. Matthew ix 20-22 *ot alibi*. Mark v. 25-34. Christ walked on the water and saved Peter when his faith failed. Matthew xiv 22-33.

Gist: The theologians describe God as invisible, intangible, unknowable and inapprehensible. But His spiritual world is ours to enter at any moment; it is our true home (compare Chesterton, *The House of Christmas*) the universe is staggeringly large; but God and his chosen messengers, the holy angels, are "nearer to 'us than breathing." We may easily, however, fail to realise this, and so miss the most glorious fact of life. Yet especially when in great trouble, those who need God and call upon Him for help, unfailingly receive it and a knowledge of His care for them, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

(2) The Hound of Heaven.

This is the "piece de resistance" (French : prize-winner) of the whole book. To most readers it is worth all the rest put together, even including the splendidly conceived but incompletely executed "In No Strange Land" by the same writer. It is a true poem, that is, an instance of creative art. It is in the form of an ode, and the critic Coventry Patmore describes it as "one of the very few great odes the language can boast." Louis Untermeyer recognises in its construction the musical form known as a fugue in which Johann Sebastian Bach excelled. The principle is that a theme is repeated at varying pitch, sometimes in different keys, harmonising with developed movements. (It is not possible to make a simpler analysis in a short compass; if this is not understood, still it should be committed to memory). This poet once described the yellow flowers of the laburnum tree as "honey of wild flame" and it would stand as a good description of his own poetry as a whole and especially in *The Hound of Heaven*. Bullett, who is at his worst where religion is concerned (most successful journalists are apt to be rather at a loss when confronted with it in any serious form) admits that the "beauties of the poem are as evident as they are numerous", i. e. many and unmistakable. He goes on, "*With all its eccentricities*, both verbal and metrical, it is one of the most splendid things in modern literature, blazing with the fire of an indubitable inspiration." He ought to know that a breath (inspiration, Latin) is not a fire, unless it's a dragon's. But this ineptitude is typical of the sort of people who call real poetry eccentricity. They do not regard it as

eccentric to use words without considering their meaning, like Humpty Dumpty in "Alice in Wonderland." But when a poet is eccentric enough to believe what he says and mean what he says and know that what he says is the same as what he means, they are very naturally frightened. Just a little more of that and the Bulletts of this world will not be worth reading or paying. and where will Methuen be then, poor thing? The truth about The Hound of Heaven is, that it is truth. Its beauty is beauty raised to the highest power of which language and form are capable; and its righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, proof against the shafts of ignorance, complacency, and prejudice, whether in the Christian sects or outside. It is the perfect example of "Bhakti Dharma" in modern English.

Paraphrase:

I ran away to escape the Beloved, putting off for long years the meeting. Introspective, I sought to avoid admitting God, by logic and by emotion, by hopes that were wrong and terror of what was right. But God did not seem to be more remote; without haste and without delay, He seemed to be following my erratic course. His voice seemed to say that so long as I deserted Him, my expedients and substitutes for serving Him would prove useless to me.

I began to feel an outcast from human society, and sought friendship and love. I had heard of course, that God was loving, but I was afraid He was too demanding. Yet many who had love enough and to spare for others, rejected me; and if some seemed ready to welcome me, my attitude to God or my consciousness of Him made

difficulties. He seemed to know how to approach me. I knew He was near, and terrified as I was, I did not know how to escape. In the majestic vastness of astronomy I sought to lose my self-consciousness and God-consciousness, without effect; I could not help knowing that the hosts of heaven were His servants and the cosmos His creation. Still I could not tell how to get away. He seemed to speak again in His deliberate pursuit, to say that no created thing would protect me against Him.

Having learnt by experience no man or woman would be my true friend, (while I ran away from God) I thought little children, in their innocent trustfulness, would love me. But children have guardian angels, who were alert to save them. So I determined to find satisfaction in nature, and to rule my moods in sympathy with its appearances. But hard though I tried, and earnestly though I studied to be one with Nature, it did not work. Nature has no voice that we can hearken to; and no tenderness. God spoke again: "Nothing will ever content you until you satisfy me."

So I knew that I was stripped of every capacity, who had been so gifted. When I was young, like Samson, I tried to pull down the pillars to which I was chained, life itself. Now shamed and stained and weary, I have not even dreams. Perhaps God's love is like a creeping plant that crushes all it clings to. Perhaps God has a vision of beauty, but can only fashion it with human instruments, and not until they are made pliable by sorrow and deprivation. But my heart is broken and regretful, and my thoughts gloomy and spiritless. There is nothing more in the present; but the future? Sometimes, gradually

oftener, I hear a challenge and see a vision of something abiding. It is the Agoniser of Gethsemane; I know who He is and what the challenge means; but I revolt from the idea that only death can end His demands or satisfy them.

The following steps become clearer; the voice of the hunter grows louder; asking why I should expect love, at any rate human love, which is a matter of reciprocity, and whether I cannot realise its futility and worthlessness. But, it continues, my seeming losses and deprivations were only means of training and teaching me to seek God first. Every single sweet and beautiful delight I dreamed of is laid up for me with Him. Now it is all over; I am caught, the hunter stops. Perhaps what has seemed to me to be sadness was only the shadow of His outstretched hand; and it was only stretched out to show His love for me.

His last word is, "You have been looking for love; and all the time you were separating yourself from it, by hiding from me and putting me from you."

Notes and explanations.

Strophe 1: fled; here transitive as 'cling' in the last poem. The principle governing *poetic licence* is that of sound with sense; if neither suffers, breach of technical grammar is allowable.

arches of the years: same and yet different, architectural metaphor. What an advance on Tennyson's "ringing grooves of change".

labyrinthine: the labyrinth was a famous maze where hapless travellers were lost and overtaken by the

monster Minotaur. This is the adjective; my mind is as confusing and dangerous as that. Mist of tears and under running laughter; metaphor of watery, liquid, *i.e.*, *transient* emotions.

vistaed hopes: my (unconsecrated) hopes for the future are "landscape gardening"—a deliberately contrived vista or long view.

precipitated: in the literal Latin meaning, flung headlong.

Titanic: the Titans were giants: chasmed fears, lesser men say "depths".

Feet: has a capital letter, meaning they are the feet of the Holy One.

instancy...instant: again a Latin sense; pressingness, pressing.

Strophe 2: (a note has been given on this, see List of Explanations at the end of the book) the sections end with a secondary refrain "Fear wist not..." The primary refrain is the variant generalisation, led up to by one or two couplets of short lines, "All things betray..."—"Naught shelters..." "Lo, naught contents.." and "Thou dravest love...", lines 15, 51, 110, 182 and also "Lo, all things..." line 160. These are part of the *fugual* scheme already mentioned.

trellised: furnished with a trellis—a structure for supporting plants. Wist—knew.

margent: margin, edge. clang'd bars dulcet jars...silvern chatter...ports o' the moon. Brilliant poetic imagination, picturing the fugitive battering the doors

: (ports—portals) of the various luminaries, to escape the Light of the World, called the Sun of Righteousness. The different noises supposed to be made, like heavy metal barriers crashed shut from the stars, silver fittings with a more gentle sound and musically sweet (*dulcet*) small shocks from the moon's defences, are conceived in a masterly and captivating manner. fretted...jars : knocked till sweet notes were produced.

skiey blossoms : a new metaphor; the rays of stars and moon were so many bars, gates, and portcullises to shut the runaway in (the world) with God, not letting him out. But the dawn and evening with their radiant clouds of sunrise and sunset, can cover, veil and hide him, as Adam tried to hide in Eden. The bright pink and golden clouds are compared metaphorically to flowers.

all His servitors : means every phenomenon of nature.

traitorous trueness... loyal deceit : this juxtaposition of opposites, called oxymoron, is a classical device. The most familiar example in English is Tennyson's

"His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."

This refers to Lancelot's devotion to Guinevere, another man's wife. It is more memorable, though not so beautiful, because it appeals to an easily understood and not uncommon relationship of persons. Thompson's figure, of the deceptive (he means unexpected) way in which created things serve God's purposes, rather than those of the would-be godless, is by comparison far-fetched. Nature does not really deceive ; our impressions are entirely our own fault.

whistling mane: now a "wild west" metaphor: the wind like a fast horse.

savannahs: blue sky compared to illimitable plains.

his chariot: 'his' refers to the thunder's, not God's.

Plashy...spurn: decorations of the chariot metaphor; the imaginary horses have their feet splashed, not with mud, but with lightning; they kick hard—spurn.

Strophe 3: The artist seeks beauty, the soul seeks love, among children. Disappointed, he throws himself into Nature's moods, only to find an impassable gulf between his human ways and hers.

wistfully: longingly; eagerly.

by the hair: innocence has a violent revulsion.

Lady-Mother's: i. e. Nature's; her vagrant tresses, unconfined hairs, are presumably atmospheric phenomena.

azured dais: blue sky, and a variant of the Bible "footstool" metaphor.

chalice: cup.

Lucent-weeping: shining tears of rain at dawn; perhaps rainbow.

Drew the bolt: i. e. penetrated within.

importings: what they import, meanings of sudden changes.

wilful: here is the pathetic fallacy again, the untrue assumption that things have our feelings and reactions. Weather is merely conditioned, it has no volition and cannot be either wilful or docile.

spumed of the wild sea-snortings: clouds are as a matter of fact drawn by evaporation from the sea. Spumed

is equivalent to sprayed. 'snorting' for the noise of breakers is original and striking.

All that's born or dies Rose and drooped with:
understand "I" rose and drooped, with them all.

or wailful or divine: whether wretched or uplifted.

bereaven: old English form of past participle; means mourned. glimmering tapers round the day's dead sanctities; metaphor of candles lit round a bier containing the dead in Christian ceremonial; night's glimmering tapers are the stars, shining rather faintly and twinkling. sanctities: holinesses in the sense that there is often a solemn hush at eventide.

sweet tears: rain, as usual.

slake my drouth: ease my dryness.

drop yon blue bosom-veil: the idea that there is a mystery of beauty behind, or concealed in nature.

noised feet: the adjective is harsh and affected; one of the very few points open to serious, if gentle, criticism.

Strophe 4. Harness: in mediæval sense of armour. Now God is fighting with a battle-axe!

Iustihead: strength, lustiness, power of desire. In youth I was self-indulgent to the point of self-destruction. The pillar metaphor refers to Samson, Judges xvi. 25-30. Samson, blinded by his enemies, pulls down the house upon them, pillars and all, to which he was brought to make sport for them.

faileth: now even dream the dreamer: I can't dream any more and my harp won't play.

linked fantasies: poetic interpretations and philosophies.

blossomy twist: like a daisy-chain, a child's play-thing.

are yielding: giving way, that is, I find it impossible to believe my own logical explanations of the world without God, and Him loving. overplussed: *i. e.*, having more than enough.

albeit—although.

amaranthine: unfading; the amaranth was a fabulous and immortal flower.

char...limn: drawing with charcoal is a recognized branch of art; it would be impossible with unburnt wood. stagnate; become motionless. dank; moist.

pulp...rind: the inside of the fruit (of Godless life) is terrible, how much worse when the end shall be reached!

a trumpet sounds: the real climax of the poem; in the depth of despair there is repeated a faint echo of splendour. But in the noble citadel the Figure wears purple, now for Christians a deathly shade, and the crown of thorns was from the cypress-tree, which is traditionally associated with mourning.

Strophe 5. bruit: (Norman-French) clamour, sound. shard: fragment.

meriting: we don't like people unless they seem to deserve it.

clotted...dingiest: flesh has often been compared to clay; the use of the *best* clay is to make fine china. But if it is not smooth and contains lumps, they make it useless. 'dingy' means dull and dirty and depressing.

Strophe 6. shade of His hand: it is because He loves me so and longs for me that I have been unhappy without Him, and "whom He loveth He chasteneth"

The METRE does not call for extensive notice. The majority of the lines are decasyllabic, with occasional trimeters, always in pairs or soon echoed, and half a dozen lines still shorter, at heights of emotion. But the result is a perfect ode, consummately adapted to its theme.

Lines 24, 45, are the secondary refrain ("Fear wist not...") Mark the parallel constructions of the last six lines of strophes 1, 2, 3, the first six lines of strophe 5 and the last strophe of the same number of lines. Mark the climax in:

"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me".

"Naught shelters thee, who will not shelter Me".

"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me".

"Lo! all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me".

"Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me".

Criticisms.

Mr. Thompson's poetry is 'spiritual' almost to a fault. He is always, even in love, upon mountain heights of perception, where it is difficult for even disciplined mortality to breathe for long together.

—*Patmore.*

For Thompson religion was never confusion; his mysteries blurred none of the common issues; they were packed as carefully as another man's title-deeds; they were, he would have claimed, tied with red tape, cut from the cloth of the College of Cardinals. "He is," said Patmore, "of all men I have known most naturally a Catholic. My Catholicism was acquired, his inherent."

"The Hound of Heaven", a study in the profound science of renunciation, was said to be the work of a man who had "thrown himself on the swelling wave of every passion". In face of such misunderstanding, at the time of his death it was hardly surprising to read in the *Mercure de France* that "he went mad, and death happily put an end to his miseries," or to hear a Professor of Romance Languages in Columbia University say that, "like Verlaine, Thompson is the poet of sin."

—Meynell.

Mr. Thompson's poetry scarcely comes by way of the outward eye at all. He scarcely depends upon occasions. In a dungeon one imagines that he would be no less a poet. The regal air, the prophetic ardours, the apocalyptic vision, the supreme utterance—he has them all. A rarer, more intense, more strictly predestinate genius has never been known to poetry.

—Garvin.

He is a poet of the first order and is also a psychologist and metaphysician. Scientific conception, cosmic vision and daring imagery characterise his poetry. He wants moderation. Catholicism is his refuge from pantheism.

—Archer.

Of all his writings he has left nothing of a finer pitch than *The Hound of Heaven* The poem is a striking instance of the co-existence of two sincerities—the personal and the artistic... It is a confession of St. Augustine done into English verse The pursuit of the soul by its "tremendous lover" has never been more purely or more powerfully suggested, even by the seventeenth-century poets with whom Thompson has so often been

compared ..He is perhaps unique among poets of our generation who are masters of the sublime...This poem for all the apparent exclusiveness of its subject, has really the universality of a great human conception.

Freeman.

There underlies all of Thompson's poetry the intuition that the beauty of earth is in some way the reflection of the beauty of heaven; earth's beauty, fragile and soon decayed, is material for the constant synthesis of birth and death...the Christian mystic's understanding of the world is upheld everywhere in Thompson's poetry.

—Shuster.

Francis Thompson took a delight in simple things which recalls Wordsworth, as in his "Daisy". He had the quietism of Wordsworth and the exalted sensuousness of Shelley, and he had the fundamental saintliness of both. But he goes further with Shelley than with Wordsworth. The kinship with Shelley in a common Pantheism is realised more than elsewhere in Thompson's 'Anthem of Earth'. His poetry is richly diapered with luxurious phrases. No other poet of his time possessed such jewelled endowment, and few of any other time equal him in this gift.

—Jackson.

In splendour of phrase no poet since Keats has rivalled Thompson, and in his verse there is a reminder of the cadence and regal grandeur of Milton's prose. Thompson was distinguished among poets of his time by his moral and spiritual exaltation. The inspired fervour of the religious mystic illumines his thought, glows in his verse, sanctifies his genius.

—Williams.

His imagination and his ear are fond of the polysyllabic sonoronsness of rare compound words, and of the cadence of an ecclesiastical vocabulary. while his highly wrought language has the golden radiance of a missal and is not free from some scholastic affectation. —*Cazamian.*

The title "The Hound of Heaven" is ill suited, according to common literary usages, to express the main idea of the ode. Hounds of Hell, of the brood of Cerberus the Three-headed, which Hercules overpowered and brought up from the nether world, are familiar agents of the malevolence of the universe. It is not according to analogy that the Hound of Heaven should represent life's benevolence. The title is, however, well chosen in that it arrests attention and makes emphatic the truth that no malevolence can approach in persistence the Eternal Benevolence in its pursuit of the human soul.

The human desire here depicted is twofold—the unnatural attempt to escape from God in His own universe, and the complementary and equally vain desire to find life's delight and satisfaction elsewhere. The Hound of Heaven, with the sternness and relentlessness of holy affection, pursues the fugitive into all the intimacies of human sympathy, into the imagined outposts and recesses of the universe and into the last secrets of nature. In each instance their hollowness as substitutes for the Almighty Godness is proved. We get the best and most concrete interpretation, according to the mind of Thompson, if we conceive this pursuing purpose as incarnated in Christ. The poet thinks of the Deity rather as "the mighty Spirit unknown". The human and exalted Christ is the chief object of his adoration and devotion. —*Wright.*

W. J. Turner : Romance.

Synopsis :

In early adolescence, the writer felt the magic of remote outlandish place-names. Such was the impression of wonder and splendour that bereavement, school surroundings, and all ordinary life seemed unreal and phantastic by comparison.

Stanza 6. entranced—filled or ravished with delight or wonder.

Metre :

Quatrains, three lines of four accents and one of three.

Appreciation and criticism :

"Exotic, romantic, yet sophisticated. Remarkable rather for its colours than for its cadence (*i.e.*, the rhythm, rhyme, and sound are distressingly ordinary)"—Bullett. "Whimsical"—Louis Untermeyer. "We turn back gladly to Walter de la Mare's 'Arabia' in which an emotion of this kind was recorded under a genuine impulse and in the poet's own genuine rhythm." (*i.e.*, this critic does not think the impulse is genuine in Turner's case, but affected; and the rhythm is certainly trite to the last degree)—Harold Monro. When all this has been said, and it is true enough, the fact remains that this poem enjoys immense popularity. Probably because it is easy to grasp the idea, and all of us remember our vague schoolboy dreams only too well, if indeed we have ever got beyond them. As an interpretation of boyhood, then, it is able and touching. The psychological insight is there. The unforced simplicity of the language has an instant appeal and is well fitted to the subject-matter. There are few adjectives—

golden. fleeting, shining. gold; dark. fairer, fading.—all to do with light: "great" 'dusty' of the most obvious kind, underlining the implicit rather than adding significance. This helps the reader who is a tyro in the language or unused to exercising his imagination. Even less adverbs—but, dimly. far-off. away. to and fro. never. It is, in fact, a clever essay; but considering how much verse there is in the world, one is impelled to wish he had done it in real prose.

Chimborazo. Cotopaxi. (volcanoes. the former extinct. in S. America) Popocatepet (usually spelt—tetpetl. a volcano in Mexico), may be discovered by reference to the gazetteer at the end of any moderately good atlas.

'The gold dark boy' of stanza five is presumably an imaginary South American. But there are plenty of real ones in British schools, and tongue tiedness (never a word I'd say) with adoration of a temporary kind, is another well-observed characteristic.

Criticisms.

The progress of some poets is like that of the tide: there is an undoubted advance, with now and then marked rushes of unexpected strength; but in between there are pauses or even fallings away, which might seem to belong to the ebb and not the flow. Turner has again and again confused those who had set their expectation upon him in this way. We do not know the exact date of each of his poems, but we do know that in their grouping they have always shown a baffling mixture of better and worse. The Georgian volume of 1917 contained, beside *The Caves of Auvergne* and the beautiful frieze called

Ecstasy, two much less fortunate poems, "I love a still Conservatory" and the *Romance* in which "Chimborazo, Cotopaxi Had stolen me away." His diction will become more personal and more modern: he has music in him, and a wide though seemingly still unco-ordinated knowledge of the modern world.

—*Newbolt*.

Here is no real poet, but a worker with 'poetic' counters; and, often even the counters fail and we are presented with a poor and bastard prose. Mr. Turner lacks compactness, accuracy of vision; and covers over his deficiencies with dithyrambs and the evocation of Beauty (with a capital B). Mr. Turner is certain that poetry must have magic. Of course some of our finest poetry is magical, a quality evoked from the ungraspable but understandable relations between completely conceived and real elements, but here (Secrecy of Beauty) magic is abracadabra and a meaningless 'beautiful' gesturing of hands. Sometimes we are offered oversweet chocolate, nauseating to the taste, much like the worst effusions of Edgar Allan Poe. Mr. Turner is a musical critic. He seems to think that the music of poetry is the music of the composers; thus there is much play with the open Italianate vowels, the liquid consonants, all the paraphernalia which seeks to bemuse-not to awaken, which is the essence of poetry. There is whipped-up ecstasy over exotic names. In sum, we believe that Mr. Turner has had 'poetic', derived, but not experienced visions, that he in fact has little to say.

—*Aaronson*.

Turner has suffered from the disadvantage of learning the "tricks of the trade" in the neo-Georgian school, and he

has acquired the habit of applying them with a certain craftiness to the particular subject in hand. We suspect that he has not read enough.

It would not be just to analyse his prentice work too searchingly. It is rich in beauty, and he has tried many and varied measures even to the free verse of his "Ode to the Future." His progress has been rapid, and there are signs that he has many of the characteristics of a "real poet."

His psychological observation is good, and when he is not representing mere moods, and is forgetting for the moment Keats, Coleridge, de la Mare and all "tricks of the trade," he seems able to step aside from himself, and measures become at such moments unaffected and delightful.

—Monro.

William Watson. *Lacrimae Musarum* (Latin: tears of the Muses, patron goddesses of the arts.) It is a minor elegy in English; greater examples are Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais* and M. Arnold's *Thyrsis*.

Vocabulary.

laurelled: crowned with honour.

bard: prophetic poet.

mute: dumb.

lawn: green grass mown.

odorous: perfumed, fragrant.

bloom: flower.

tremulous: shaking as they hang.

Druid: prehistoric tree-worshipper.

rift: break.

rent: torn.

lute: musical instrument (faultless because he thinks Tennyson's poetry perfect).

season—autumn.

pensive: thoughtful.

hued: coloured, probably pale.

reluctant: unwilling (to die).

fantastic: dreamlike.

coronal: wreath, meaning vegetation.

mingles: is mixed.

ephemeral: lasting only a day.

temporal: belonging to time.

bay: leaf used for crowns, like laurel above

mundane: of this world.

transitory: passing.

rapt: snatched.

Virgil, Theocritus, Catullus, Lucretius, great Latin poets.

Stygian: of Styx, river of the dead.

gaunt: skin and bone.
 rose of youth: Keats died
 young.

beseech: humbly ask for.
 aspersed: sprinkled.
 foam: spray of water.
 suave: sweet and calm.
 Spenser Chaucer: great
 English poets.

crave: ask as a favour.
 Athens: ref. to Sophocles
 and others.

Florence: ref. to Dante.

Weimar: town of Schiller
 and Goethe.

Stratford: ref. to Shakespeare.
 Rome, to Latin poets,
 (see above.)

reclaim: take back.
 august: to be revered.
 serenity: calmness.

rapture: great joy.
 Whole: God and Nature.

Athens: ref. to Sophocles
 and others.

Florence: ref. to Dante.

Stratford: ref. to Shakes-
 peare.

strain: song.

unanimity: complete agree-
 ment.

unflinching: without hesi-
 tation.

communal: shared.

prime: first beginning.

expound: teach.

lyre: another poetic instru-
 ment (hence lyric poetry)

elemental: out of which all
 is made.

obscurely: not at all clearly.
 darkly.

imperative: giving orders.
 powerful.

trackless: that which cannot
 be followed.

oblivious: forgetful.

recondite: well hidden.

enigma: puzzle.

lore: knowledge.

mandate: command (for him
 to sing).

sped: came fast or suddenly.

trance: mental vision.

Attic shore: in Greece,
 famous for nightingales.

prevail o'er: are stronger
 than.

plaudits: applause.

transient: passing.

airs: breeze.

tranquil: calm, serene.

wizard, roguish, wonderful,
 time is not, (meaning, his hair was not white),
 obscure little known to fame.

Ionian eastern shore of Aegean, habitat of blind
 Heaen.

palimpsest document with one thing written over
 with another.

utterance: speech.

hallowing: making holy.

veer, swing round.

yesteryear: last year (cf. yesterday).

dubious: doubtful, not worth believing.

Augustus: Octavianus Caesar, nephew, adopted son,
 and political successor of Julius Caesar.

Maro: i.e., Vergil.

Mantuan: from Vergil's native town, Mantua.

Virgil: Watson doesn't even know that scholars spell
 it Vergil!

honeyed spoil: he means sweet advantage.

Muse's hive: the artists are busy as bees and Tenny-
 son borrows from them all! (His disciple does, anyway).

great calm: of the dead.

tumults: disturbances.

immelodious: untuneful; i.e., we have less music
 now we have not Tennyson to sing to us.

Untermeyer says that in this poem, as in his similar
 long compositions on Wordsworth and Shelley, he
 "attempted, sometimes successfully, to combine the
 manners of these poets." "He is capable of producing
 effects both large and fine." "It is in the longer poems
 that Watson is paradoxically most and least himself."

"Summoning the wraiths of Wordsworth, Milton, Tennyson, he achieves the state of the devotee who merges his own identity in that which he worships." "But Watson, alas, is not in essence an illumined disciple, only a bemused priest repeating an old ritual. Since his idol is not a single or defined figure, he loses his own identity without reflecting a better one, becoming almost a composite parody."

Harold Monro says he has a "virulent talent."

In other words:—

Sir William Watson clearly thinks that the great days are gone; he is a *laudator temporis acti*, a belauder of time past. Milton was the "God-gifted organ-voice of England". Wordsworth the peerless appraiser of nature and depicter of sincere emotions; and Tennyson (culling garlands from this poem) a master, faultless in music, elevated in thought, one who has made the human soul stronger and more beauteous. Such is the author's conviction; and he illustrates it by the sincerest form of flattery and close imitation, not of one, but of all three. Milton's pseudo-classical heroics, Wordsworth's pastorals, Tennyson's soporific contemplation, as from a deck-chair, of nature as seen in an English Victorian park,—all three are woven, or perhaps fused, into something vaguely familiar and vaguely impressive but most surely vague.

Metre:

Mainly decasyllabics (iambic pentameters) rhymed in a complex scheme. Strophe 1 consists of 22 lines, the first 11 with only three different rhymes, the second with five. The ninth and twenty-second lines are short trimeters. Strophe 2 of 19 lines, has seven rhymes;

the sixth, fourteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth are trimeters. The next two strophes are of 12 and 29 lines, with 6 and 9 different rhymes respectively; the 2nd and 4th lines only in the third strophe, and the 8th in the fourth, are trimeters. The fifth strophe (as printed) has *declined into conventional couplets and quatrains*, twenty lines in all, the 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th and 16th being trimeters. The final (6th) strophe of eighteen lines, with eight rhymes, has the 2nd, 5th, 9th, 12th and 18th lines trimeters.

N.B.—The metre is hardly worth this elaborate discussion and analysis, except that, unlike the diction, it is comparatively simple, and affords an easy exercise to the student who is previously unfamiliar with English accents and stresses. If it is grasped that “—ious” is only *one* syllable in English (as in the next to last line of the poem, “*immelodious*” is pronounced in four syllables) the above can easily be checked and mastered.

Criticisms.

He is influenced by Morris and Keats and his work shows the 18th century precision of thought and utterance. He is an eclectic, *purely contemplative, not indulging in metrical licenses*. Four heads of his poetry: (1) literary subjects; (2) political poems; (3) philosophical poems; (4) lapses into prosaism. His *political* creed is that British interests may in the long run be identical with the wide interests of humanity. He is not an unimpeachable artist, but he handed on the classical tradition of English poetry.

—*Archer.*

In "Wordsworth's Grave" and "Lacrimae Musarum" Sir William Watson has written two noble elegies, but he is in the following of Milton, Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, and only slightly a man of his generation. The last poem is his most beautiful, warmly-coloured and melodious poem. The opening passage of the elegy could not be bettered, either in the politic imagery of its thought or in the fitting stress it lays upon the oneness of Tennyson and his poetry with the racial consciousness of the land to which he belonged. It is in the elegy, the ode and the quasi-philosophical poem that Sir William Watson's muse finds her fittest sphere of song. The character of the larger part of his poetry is, as in Wordsworth, "emotion recollected in tranquillity". Though his genius is rather elegiac than lyrical he has written a few lyrics of supreme beauty. His political poetry has hardly more than an ephemeral interest. The danger of substituting rhetorical verse for poetry always beset him, and at the last he does not escape. At the death of Alfred Austin he had some chance of being appointed Poet Laureate.

—*Williams.*

Mr. Watson's best work shows a true balance between "understanding" and "imagination", and that in his less satisfactory work he is affected by the two extremes; excessive romanticism on the one hand, as in *The Prince's Quest*, and excessive intellectualism on the other, as in some of his political and philosophical poems.

The wit and intellectual shrewdness that characterise his *Epigrams* (1884) is unquestionable; and the rhythmic felicities that star many of his odes and sonnets, remind us, th their deliberate, clear-visioned outlook, of such

masters as Milton and Wordsworth. It reveals also the essential attitude of the man towards life. He has little really of the eager, adventurous spirit of the Romantic. That was a transient phase. He is at his best a thinker in verse; his weakness as a poet to-day is the weakness of over-weighting his verse with thought.

—*Compton-Rickett.*

He was knighted in 1917, and it was understood that he would be appointed Poet Laureate upon the death of Alfred Austin. But some of his radical and semi-poetical poems are supposed to have displeased the powers at court, and the honour went to Robert Bridges....Too much of Watson's time has been devoted to extolling the tradition he worships and attacking a kind of poetry he dislikes and which, one suspects, he does not understand. His exasperations aside, Watson is capable of producing effects both large and fine. It is in the longer poems that Watson is paradoxically most and least himself.

—*Untermeyer.*

W. B. Yeats : 1. When you are old.

Synopsis : The Poet asks his Beloved to read his poems in her tired old age. She will remember through his verse her own former beauty and its many wooers; and that he alone did more, he recognised her high purpose, and cared for her sad moods as well as enjoyed her merry ones. Then she will recall also that the love between them did not last; it was a fugitive thing, perhaps because it was too idealistic, and not prepared to face facts.

The locale of this poem is a *fireside*, where one is comfortable but sleepy ("nodding") in the cold winter evenings of Europe. By "bending down" (st. 3) beside the "glowing bars" of iron with which old-fashioned fireplaces are fitted, one can see to read.

Gerald Bullett tells us that Ronsard wrote a sonnet in French, which he gives, of which the first four lines are so similar that unthinking people would say that Yeats's poem here (not a sonnet, but three rhyming decasyllabic quatrains, ABBA) is a translation. But Ronsard's lady, though also sitting by the fire and singing to herself his verse, and surprised that he worshipped her once when she was fair, has to regret her own haughty disdain of him. If Yeats means this, when he says that their love ran away to the mountains, and hid his face in the stars (he might equally well mean that he himself was the one to blame) he says it so very tenderly; and Ronsard concludes with the Epicurean advice to "pluck from to-day life's roses", i.e., "Gather ye rose-buds while ye may",—make hay while the sunshines. Yeats has no such descent into the commonplace. Yeats does not dwell on his own death and dissolution and beauty's decay, as Ronsard does;

he only says "a little sadly." As Bullett adds, it is "a sublimity of tenderness."

Notes.

line 4, deep shadows in the eyes show powerful and controlled emotion.

7 one man, the poet himself; it is dedicated to a friend. pilgrim soul : our soul goes on to a higher, desired, phase of existence.

10 love fled : the meaning is that instead of declaring itself, and finding fruition and fulfilment, love took refuge in poetry.

2. Lake Isle of Innisfree.

These twelve lines are perhaps the most popular in the language to-day. The halting (deliberately) pauses and lilt of the syllables, even without musical accompaniment, make an unforgettable lyric. It combines the urge of nostalgia, the love of nature and simplicity contrasted with town, civilisation, colour opposed to drabness, and quiet and security which are the two greatest needs and wants of modern busy but uncertain life. With all this in twelve lines, no wonder it is popular.

Notes and Explanations : line 1. Note that Yeats employs repetition to get a haunting effect "and go, and go" The real Innisfree is not much like the poem.

2. wattles : hurdles, interwoven thin wooden strips; suggests poverty.

3. bean rows : planted rows of vegetables.

4. bee-loud: Yeats does not mind coining words. There are very few moments in a city when one could hear bees at all. A glade is a smooth green hollow clearing in a forest.

5. Peace: Gallup polls and Mass Observation show that all middle-class and working people desire security more than any other satisfaction.

6. Veils of morning: the sun-painted clouds. cricket sings: i.e., in the hut.

7. glimmer: faint trembling light. purple glow: through trees? In Europe, when perceptible at all, noon is usually a pale glare.

8. Evening...wings: this line is sheer poet's magic. why *full*? Because genius knew it the perfect word.

10. Lapping: the lazy splash of wind-blown ripples or wavelets on the shore.

11. Roadway...pavements grey: that is, in town.

12. Deep heart's core: most inward, most secret, most precious memory.

Criticisms.

✓
~~Mr.~~ Yeats is accepted by nearly all the advanced younger generation of poets as master. Their unanimity is extraordinary: but such unanimity can also be dangerous. A man made a classic in his own lifetime may suffer two subsequent fates: to live on by reputation rather than by love, and to become to a still newer generation, the granite obstacle to its own sort of creativeness, and therefore very soon to be written down or even denied. Before Hardy's death the then young poets were nearly all Hardy-worshippers—Sassoon, Graves, Blunden, Nichols. Now, some seventeen years afterward Hardy the poet is little known by the new generation, and, where known, tends to be rejected by it. It is, we think, important that this should be understood. Our time is singularly lacking in critical

standards, and literary conviction, and the slavish acceptance of Yeats, while so many others have gone down before the iconoclasts (it is extraordinary to find how few of the younger critics have sought to understand him but have instead cried up the undoubted splendour and memorableness of his pagan poetry) has done a good deal of harm to the other and equally important modes that poetry can assume.

—Aaronson.

Celtic legend. Oriental tale. Blake and the French symbolists, all these have contributed to the formation of Mr. Yeats's vision of life over and above the natural endowment of his mind; for, as Mr. George Moore in his last apostasy and disillusion has pointed out, his inspiration visits him from literature, not life. And in this characteristic, at least, Mr. Yeats is the fellow of Maeterlinck. Mr. Yeats's earliest lyrics are not peculiarly distinctive of his genius, and they betray little kinship with the fully developed mysticism of his later poems. By the power to communicate a personal enthusiasm Mr. Yeats has been the prompter in others of more good work than he himself has produced; for, despite the beauty of part, and especially the earlier part, of his work as a poet, his genius as a writer of lyric has greatly failed him since he published *The Wind among the Reeds*.

—Williams.

Mr. Yeats is a symbolist as well as a mystic whose yearnings for the supernatural have failed to derive full satisfaction from Christianity and in order to appease his hunger for faith he has had to invent a philosophy of his own, the philosophy of the poet. According to him the frontiers of human mind are not fixed, our little individual souls are only parts of the Universal Soul with which they

communicate by means of subconscious images and emotions, *i.e.*, symbols. This explains the importance of dream experiences to the poet; but the dream starting with the ideal, ends in pessimism and desolation, far from all faith, all hope, and the curve of his life at last closes on nothingness.

—Paul-Dubois.

His poetry is never obscure in the way Swinburne's song of Italy is obscure with an emptiness and excess of sound, a strange fire that produces neither heat nor light, but only the roaring of flame and dust of ashes. Even the more mystical poems are kept concrete by the vividness of their imagery, and stamp a definite picture on the mind. The most abstract among them are never addressed solely to the intellect, though in the simplest the intellect is never forgotten. Behind each one of them there is brain-work, but they are also, in Milton's words, "Simple, sensuous, impassioned."

Nor does he express in his poetry the thoughts and tendencies of his age, as Matthew Arnold and Tennyson expressed at least the religious thought of their time. Probably no poet has ever got into his work a more personal atmosphere. He seems not so much to look at the world as to brood over the images that were thrown from the world upon the mirror of his own soul.

His prosody is based upon what Mr. Bridges has called "The natural speech-stress" rather than on that which is ordered by the "numeration of syllables", and a strict regularity of accent. Only, indeed, in this way could he get that admirable variety into his metres which makes their music so wonderful.

Mr. Yeats has explicitly rejected Matthew Arnold's theory of poetry as a criticism of life, yet in a sense, all

his own poetry and prose is a criticism of life, just as all religion is, whether its last word be for refusal or acceptance.

His poetry, delicate and unsubstantial as the grey dew upon the grass before the sun has risen, appeals to us in some dim region of the mind where the laws of logic and of reason have no meaning.

He says, "I believe in the practice and philosophy of what we have agreed to call magic, in what I must call the evocation of spirits, though I do not know what they are, in the power of creating magical illusions, in the visions of truth, in the depths of the mind when the eyes are closed, and I believe in three doctrines....

- (1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
- (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
- (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols."

He is not a universal poet: his art does not come out of the whole of life, as Shakespeare's art comes, or even as Whitman's comes; and if we judge poetry by the breadth of the poet's vision of life it is possible that compared with Whitman he will seem a secondary poet. If we judge it, however, as I believe we must, by its intensity, its ecstasy, its sheer beauty and music, then, of course, the position will be exactly reversed. If Shelley is a great poet, if

Keats and Coleridge and Rossetti are great poets then Mr. Yeats is a great poet also, greater, I think, than any of these. —Reid.

A weakness of the modern Irish school (even at its best in Mr. Yeats) or of the exquisite poetry of Mr. De La Mare may be that its sensibility is a development out of the main track. It is this which seems to make it minor poetry in a sense in which Mr. Hardy's best work or Mr. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is major poetry.

—Richards.

I have said that Mr. Yeats is the only one among the younger English poets who has the whole poetical temperament, and nothing but the poetical temperament. He is also the only one who combines a continuously poetical substance with continuous excellence of poetical technique. Celtic, if you will, in the quality of his imagination, he has trained that imagination to obey him as the Celtic imagination rarely obeys those who are for the most part possessed by it. Seeming to many to be the most spontaneous of writers, he is really the most painstaking, the most laboriously conscientious. He makes his visible pictures out of what has come to him invisibly in dreams, in the energetic abandonment of meditation; but he rarely falls into the error of most mystical poets, who render their visions literally into that other language of ordinary life, instead of translating them freely, idiom for idiom. His verse, lyric and dramatic, has an ecstasy which is never allowed to pass into extravagance, into rhetoric, or into vagueness. Though he has doubtless lost some of the freshness and the fairy quality of his early work, that freshness and that fairy quality have been replaced by an

elaborately simple art, which becomes more and more accomplished, and, in the best sense, precise. The grace of youth is bound to fade out of poetry as it fades out of faces; and all we can hope is that, as in life the first grey hairs may bring with them some of the grey wisdom of experience, so in art time may strengthen what is strong and bring conscious mastery instead of the unconsciousness of early vigour. Mr. Yeats could not again become so simple, so joyous, so untouched by human things, as to write another such poem as "The Lake-Isle of Innisfree"; but he can write now with a deeper and more passionate sense of beauty, more gravely, with a more remote and yet essentially more human wisdom. And his verse, though he has come to play more learned variations upon its rhythms, has become more elaborately simple, more condensed, nearer in form to what is most like poetry in being most like prose. It is the mistake of most writers in verse to form for themselves a purely artificial kind of rhythm, in which it is impossible to speak straight.

—Symons.

The incarnation of the Irish Kelt. Irish poets before him have either been absorbed in love, potheen (Irish whisky) and politics, or like Goldsmith and Moore become Anglicised. The spirit of the myth-makers and myth-believers is in him. This is morality touched with superstition. His genius is essentially lyrical. In spite of his foreign themes he draws his true strength from his native soil. His revision is always for the better. His affinity to Maeterlinck accounts for the sensitiveness of the animal kingdom to spiritual presences. He is one of the poets who seem to despise accent putting often a trochee in the second foot of the line.

—Archer.

He is the Laureate of Ireland. He says, "In my heart of hearts I have never been quite certain that one should be more than an artist, that even patriotism is more than an impure desire in an artist." (*Ideas of Good and Evil*.)

He is a self-conscious artist. The Celtic spirit is a sense of infinite longing, of something remote and unattainable, of wistfulness and melancholy, of a sort of homesickness of the soul, e.g., *The Lake-Isle of Innisfree*.

—Sturgeon.

"*The Lake Isle of Innisfree*," "*The Song of Wandering Aengus*", "*The Rose of the World*" are a few contemporary poems which have attained the permanence of folk-songs. Nor is the later work less memorable. Modernity has produced no more vivid sonnet than the seemingly classical "*Leda and the Swan*."

Although Yeats evolved a highly original poetry, his work was strongly influenced, the influences, strangely combined, being particularly evident in his early work. His poems owe something to Blake, more to the French Symbolists; his plays show an obvious indebtedness to Maeterlinck and even to Ibsen. But while Yeats continually yielded to magnetic tremors, the point of his art swung to the true north. That north was within himself. More than any of his compatriots, Yeats accomplished "a more subtle rhythm, a more organic form." He perfected a music which, not essentially Gaelic, has come to be regarded as more characteristic than the Irish melodies of such latterday harpers as Mangan, Gerald Griffin and their fellows.

—Untermeyer.

Thirty important EXPLANATIONS and one GIST.

1. "Babylon": The wave.....by my side.

The poet describes the lapse of centuries since Babylon's day as an inflowing tide, and the imaginary reversion to that period as a withdrawal or ebb. Human events and lives make up the drops of the waves, and one, his inamorata, being still in Ireland, is like a drop left behind on the shore. He knows she is the same girl by her eyes.

2. Ditto. Oh light.....eternal things. Our life in Babylon was only concerned with the passion of the moment, it had little abiding moral significance. But lovers themselves are deathless, as they now know.

3. "The Fallen". But...where to the Night. We have desires and hopes; often the most precious ones are the most hidden (we say they are 'deep down in the heart'). This is like the source of the purest living water. It is in this way that the memory of the fallen is *felt* rather than thought of. Stars are part of the night, more visible and valued then. So our heroes are part of all that is best and dearest in our country, jewels of its vesture, of character and honour and tradition.

4. "A Passer-by". And yet.....than mine. The ship was not hailed, that is, shouted to, in order to ascertain its name and business. But the poet aims a fancy, a random arrow of thought, and concludes, not knowing whether he is correct, that the purpose of the ship (personified), its courage in the face of certain danger, which is beyond criticism, and its destination, lead to more happiness than the poet returning to his own country can expect for himself.

5. "The Linnet." Blest union...tender loves. Acting by the light of nature, obeying the promptings of the mating instinct, the linnets have no doubt or hesitation; they are quite sure they are doing the best possible thing. Human courtship is often marred, spoilt, by doubts of each other or as to suitability or uncertainty of social and economic conditions. In the linnet's case drought in summer might bring all sorts of misfortunes and starvation on the family, but the very fact of their complete trust, besides not allowing them to suspect it, gives them strength to bear it when it comes. Symbolically, summer might be prosperity in human affairs: it often dries up the springs of affection and causes marital disaster. Yet we suppose that we are wiser than the birds, although their tenderness and trust might serve us better than our reasoning and logic.

✓ 8. "The Dead". There are ..the night. The poet pictures a lake in bright breezy daylight. The ripples caused by the breeze make a cheerful noise and look gay, as if they smiled and laughed. The bright blue sky is rich just as the dark is poor. But in the night frost sets in, like a magician waving his wand just once. The whole lake is frozen, and the sheet of ice concentrates and reflects the light of the moon and stars. The effect on the beholder is glorious, spacious and peaceful. In the same way, these dead, who were "lovely and pleasant in their lives" like the sunlit scene, now that they are dead and gone, motionless as if frozen, supply by the grandeur of their ungrudging sacrifice a conviction in the survivors of the glorious dignity of mankind, the spacious or unhindered realization of the divine that is reflected in their final and

supreme unselfishness, and the peace, or freedom from disturbance and anxiety, that is the sure corollary of that conviction and realisation, though it is all "under the night", that is, part of a sense of bereavement. (THIS SIX-LINE SECTION CONCLUDING THE SONNET WELL ILLUSTRATES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POETRY AND PROSE. BY NO MEANS ALL ITS SIGNIFICANCE IS EXHAUSTED BY 180 WORDS OF EXPLANATION!).

7 "Grantchester". And there the unregulated... *verboten*. All Germany gives the impression of being regulated. organised clockwork, coerced; it extends to the grass, on which no one is allowed to walk, and seems to affect even the phenomena of nature. On the other hand, the English countryside goes to the other extreme of personal freedom, and the setting sun seems to be taking it easy, and the evening star, Hesperus, (Greek form of Vesper) does not seem to hurry, but to be like a tired man taking his ease with his boots off, and vague rather than clear-cut and definite. The lovely riverine meadows are free to the wanderer. (The German has been translated in the notes).

8 Ditto. Still in ...hurry by. Lord Byron used to bathe and was a famous swimmer when at Cambridge. He lost his life swimming in the Hellespont (?). Being long dead, he may have learnt more swimming skill in the river Styx, the river of the dead. Dan Chaucer, pet name of the writer of the Canterbury Tales (his baptismal name was Geoffrey) writes of this very stream chattering beneath the mill-wheel, which has long vanished, being now a phantom or ghost like Chaucer himself. But educated

people, lovers of the countryside, can imagine it all still there from their reading. Tennyson was rather self-conscious in studying nature piecemeal and elaborating descriptive effects; so there is a jest in "notes with studious eye." Brooke was, of course, both undergraduate and don at Cambridge, and loved the country above all things. (Byron died of fever in Greece).

9. "The House of Christmas."

For men.....is done. Men are homesick in their homes strangers...foreign land. Thrice-repeated paradox. Our true natures are not designed only for breeding and working, not even for fighting and adventure. We belong to God and His world, a miracle of self-giving and humbleness that transfigures the commonplace and insignificant into the splendour of divine purpose and fulfilment.

10. Ditto. But our rest...star. Fire-drake is not discoverable in ordinary works of reference. See notes. It may even mean a censor. If so, our peace is near and easily attainable, but only by giving ourselves to sincere worship (incense) of the divine babe. "The heart of man is restless, until it finds rest in thee." (St. Augustine of Hippo) Our peace is put in impossible things, that is the Virgin birth and the announcement of it to shepherds; the unthinkable wings are those of the angels who sang "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will," and the incredible star is the star of Bethlehem, whose motions which indicated the stable at Bethlehem, are not reconcilable with Victorian astronomy. [Bible references: Matthew, ii, 1, 2, 7, 9, 10. (star); Luke, i, 26-35. (Virgin Birth); also Matthew, i, 18-25; and Luke ii, 8-20 (shepherds and angels).]

11. Ditto: last stanza. Notes.—in the evening, i.e., at last. Home is Bethlehem where Christ was born, a microcosm of heaven. God's purpose is eternal, so it is older than Eden, the beginning of man as a moral being; and taller than Rome, because its power is in every way more pervading and universal. Ll. 5, 6 as explained above, St. 4; and 'God was homeless' refers to there being no room at the inn for Jesus to be born, Luke ii. 7. All men are at home there, because the incarnation is the answer and satisfaction of all our questionings and longings. God become man to restore man to full participation in God. (It is not possible to explain or comment on such a poem as this, without assuming, what the writer accepted and embraced, that the Bible is a direct and unquestionable statement of fact. Other forms of faith must be asked to realise this and consequently need not be offended.)

Expl. Rome was temporal power, a magnificent achievement of purely human organisation, engineering, and discipline. It appeals to the sense of adventure. But ambition and domination, even material betterment and physical peace, are less than man. Man's destiny is found in his heart, in the divine and eternal attributes of mercy, truth, and love, made plain to the simple, sincere and humble by the living parable of Bethlehem and for ever incomprehensible to the worshippers of mere intellect, the disingenuous, and the proud. (A much better gist is the magnificat, Luke i, 46-55; for "Israel", 54, read "people who belong to God" and for "Abraham" read "believing forefathers", and it has universal application.) The seed are those who by similar disposition and faith become spiritual descendants.

12. "The Moon": last stanza. Moonlight wakes the song of nightingales. The poet cannot speak at all, much less sing, being overpowered by beauty; he can only worship with all his being, knowing that the most perfect poem could not equal the reality. But such knowledge is a proof of greatness, beyond automatic response to stimulus, which is all the bird-song can be. Speechless worship that proceeds from a heart in ecstasy is greater than a chorus of praise.

13. "La Figlia Che Piange."

I should..... noon's repose. See last six lines of "Notes and Explanations" beginning "If she had acted..." The last line of the poem, "troubled midnight.....noon's repose" implies that the poet lies awake longing for her love again; and in the heat of the day he still thinks of it.

14. "The Dying Patriot": 2nd st. Noon in the poet's concept appears to refer to the Middle Ages and perhaps Stuart times, say 14th. to 16th. centuries. Undoubtedly the greatest achievement of civilisation in Britain is the oldest "humanistic" university. It is also the birthplace of parliamentary government under Simon de Montfort, warring with kings, and in the Civil War it supported Charles I against the intolerant Cromwellian Rump Parliament. Hence the blood upon the academic gown. The Renaissance, and revival of Greek learning, pioneered at Oxford, and most highly developed there, produced an aesthetic appreciation which is comparable to the beauty of a statue, cold stone, not beating hearts. The flower-gardens of the Colleges are unrivalled; it is a stronghold of conservatism, i. e., love of ancient things only; and nearly three-quarters of all the Prime Ministers have been Oxford men,—"the great men go."

15. "If" : 2nd st., last four lines. It is a common experience for leaders to find that what they have said is distorted out of its true sense or has a totally unintended and deceptive complexion put upon it, by interested parties with the object of influencing the undiscerning in a wrong direction by the use of the prestige attaching to the leader's words. Again, after years of effort to establish a public conscience, a casual political accident discredits or destroys one's work. A genuine philanthropist, undiscouraged, will use what abilities he has left ("worn-out tools") and though the public jeers, painstakingly set to work all over again

16. "Ditto" : If you can fill the unforgiving minute... my son. If you can do the maximum amount of good work without wasting time (and time once lost is never regained, it does not forgive you), there is no achievement to which you may not aspire; but however that may be (different people have remarkably different aspirations), whether or not you obtain your heart's desire, you will certainly be a true manly man, which matters much more—"not what you do, but what you are."

17. "Recessional". St. 3. The poet supposes an emergency when the sea-power is dispersed, at the same time victories (causing beacons to be lit on the headlands and shores) become fewer, reverses correspondingly more frequent. It was only a short time ago (yesterday) that we had much pomp of power; yet already the loss is irreparable, the disaster may be as complete as that which overtook Nineveh and Tyre, great cities of antiquity famous above all for the completeness and barbarity of their ruin and destruction. Unceasing spiritual

watchfulness is required to avert this. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

18. "Anthem for Doomed Youth": last st. All this has been thoroughly explained already. Candles glimmering in the hands of boys are a Christian ceremonial accompaniment, like the pall or silken veil over the bier. Flowers are usually sent to funerals, and the blinds of a house of bereavement are drawn down at least until the funeral is over. Blinds are either tight-fitting covers for windows let down from a roller at night or if "venetian" consisting of a collapsible curtain of thin wooden strips held parallel by canvas and tape. Only separated loves, only the sadness of desolation will mourn these; luxuries of public funerals are denied them.

19. "The Celestial Surgeon": last four lines.

If, on the other hand, ordinary promptings will not make me aware of the duty of happiness, and of how much there is to be thankful for, then, the poet prays, do not let my spirit die hardened and callous like Dives, but even at the cost of incurring terrible guilt or deadly wickedness, let me not stay torpid. The worst state is not danger of damnation: the worst state, because it is the cruellest to others, is indifference. ('dead' means ready to die. lifeless).

20. "In No Strange Land". St. 2. The fish possesses and inhabits its own element the sea; eagles are domiciled in air, but human spirituality belongs to, and inhabits, the world of grace, the unseen power of God. It is incongruous to suggest or suppose that heaven is in the sky, or distant stars.

21. Ditto. St. 3. Astronomical distances leave the mind that would grasp them numb. It was strictly scientific, in the author's day, to speak of wheeling systems, *i.e.*, stars in their courses, darkening till they disappear. The drift of pinions is the tendency, direction, of angels' wings. We find it hard to realise that angels and spirits of good are all about us, because the doors of our minds are closed with bodily sense, feelings of clay, not spiritual perceptions; they shut out truth like bars on a window or door.

22. Ditto. St. 4. The angels have always surrounded us and do still; just as you can turn a stone and find a beetle, so anything you do, there is an angel there. But "modern" minds are really unwilling to be friendly towards the spiritual world, being too self-absorbed; so their faces are estranged and they do not see. As angels are pure spirits doing God's Will, they are splendid.

23. "The Hound of Heaven". I pleaded...to do. As if turned out I begged many loving folk ("hearted casement curtained red" means windows of personality whose good deeds made a beautiful pattern) to admit me to friendship, because I was afraid that surrender to God would mean renouncing the pleasures of human intercourse; and sometimes one would welcome me (parted wide) but some scruple of conscience (His approach) prevented the deepening of intimacy. The metaphor is of a stormy night and the hapless traveller seeing lighted windows, and knowing there is warmth and comfort within, yet even if one is opened to him, the force of the wind bangs it shut again immediately.

24. Ditto. I tempted all...deceit. Day and night and nature are the servitors of their Creator, they must wait

upon him in their order. So they cannot be used to enable an artist to hide from God; the more he takes refuge in them, the more certainly he cannot escape the conviction that God is, and God is beauty, righteousness, and truth. (The oxymoron has already been noted).

25. Ditto. In vain tears...mouth.^a It is useless for the nature-enthusiast to try to pretend that he has "sympathy" with nature, because it cannot feel and therefore has no sympathy with him. If there is something behind some reality within the sky, some comfort hidden (other than God) no one has ever found it. If she would owe me, that is, if she would do me any good as to her child the utmost she can do is to tempt me with her external splendours, but she can no more appease the hunger of my soul than a stepmother can please a child that disowns her.

26. Ditto. In the rash...the heap. "In the rash lustihead" has already been explained, as a reference to Samson. s. v. Hours hold up life in the sense that there are only so many of them, a limited number, then life is gone. "Pulled my life upon me" means wasted hours in dissipation. "Grimed with smears" refers to the feeling of being soiled, of needing purification, familiar to every normal human being, emphasised, accentuated, by the writer's mystical perception of how waste piles on waste like a rubbish heap. Virginity seems to have been mangled, i.e., torn to death.

27. Ditto. His name...death. Only Christ was robed with purple and came back from death, hence cypress-crowned, cypress being a classical symbol of death. In "glooming" the whole poem represents the shrinking, repugnance to recognize that the highest function of life is suffering and that all must face death, which, being nobly faced, is vanquished. God can only work through utter self-

sacrifice; "sanguis martyrum semen ecclesiae" (the blood of martyrs propagates the Church); true, but easy to sneer at, as here. 'Dunged with rotten death:' an agricultural metaphor. *Expl.* The escapist poet asks bitterly whether, as is currently said, God really wants the heart, or whether as a matter of fact He will be satisfied with nothing less than taking away one's life. Then in any case, it seems that human hearts can only "bring forth fruit" if they are faithful unto death; but death to a self-indulgent unsundered person is terrible and disgusting, suggesting decomposition; and decomposed matter is the best manure or fertiliser. hence "dunged", i. e., manured. Horse and cattle droppings or dung are a common primitive manure.

28. *Lacrimae Musarum.* Lo in this season.....
neither fall.

Autumn colours of trees and plants are quiet brown, suggesting thoughtfulness and gravity, so the hues are described as pensive. The leaf *must* fall, it is "doomed"; it seems (the pathetic fallacy again!) as if it did not wish to, was reluctant. Fantastic coronal of withered earth, i. e., all the things that grow on earth being withered and faded are dream-like (fantastic) and are said to crown it. The breeze blowing amid falling leaves makes a sound like sighing, and similarly the sea's plaintive noise seems to share the general mourning. But Tennyson has worn an immortal crown. his poetic glory is not liable to seasonal changes. (Watson was a little optimistic in this).

29. *Ditto.* There seek him.....by his strain.

There, that is, in wind, sea, earth's movement or apparent stillness and air, in the stars that seem so—

calm, tremendous and remote; in flowers like roses whose beauty of form and colour delights one. All can serve to remind us of Tennyson's gift; but if we look elsewhere (in houses or schools and colleges, for instance) we shall not find him, our quest will be in vain. But also he has permanently strengthened and beautified humanity; so in a sense we can find him in man's soul.

30. Ditto. Once in his youth.....Ionian strand. The maker of this verse says that his youth was obscure, that is, he was little known then. But he says the subject of the poem makes it great (a questionable doctrine) and that he met that subject, Tennyson, and shook hands with him. In doing so, he says, he felt he was not merely shaking hands with Alfred Tennyson but with all the great poets. Poets are a divine race, men born of heaven and great poets are the heroes of that divine race to which Tennyson belonged. They are all laurelled, crowned with fadeless renown, and the sire or progenitor was Homer, who was blind, and was an Ionian (Asiatic) Greek. Strand, the Ionian cities were all ports, so Homer belonged to the coast or strand on the east of the Aegean sea.

Rupert Brooke: "Grantchester."

Gist: Germany is hot and dry, regimented into precise order. modern and beastly: the poet remembers the scene of his childhood, cool in summer by clear waters, haphazard in the English beauty-loving way, laden with historic and literary memories; charming. The lure of England is strong for idealists, and specially of Cambridgeshire for intellectuals; but of all that county Grantchester is most restful, its people most attractive, the riverine countryside most satisfying in its simplicity.